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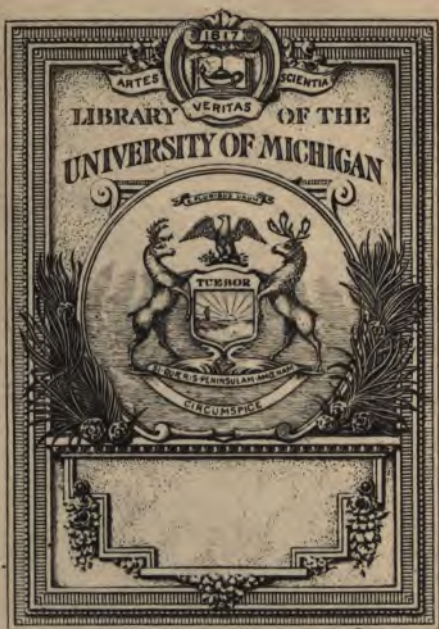
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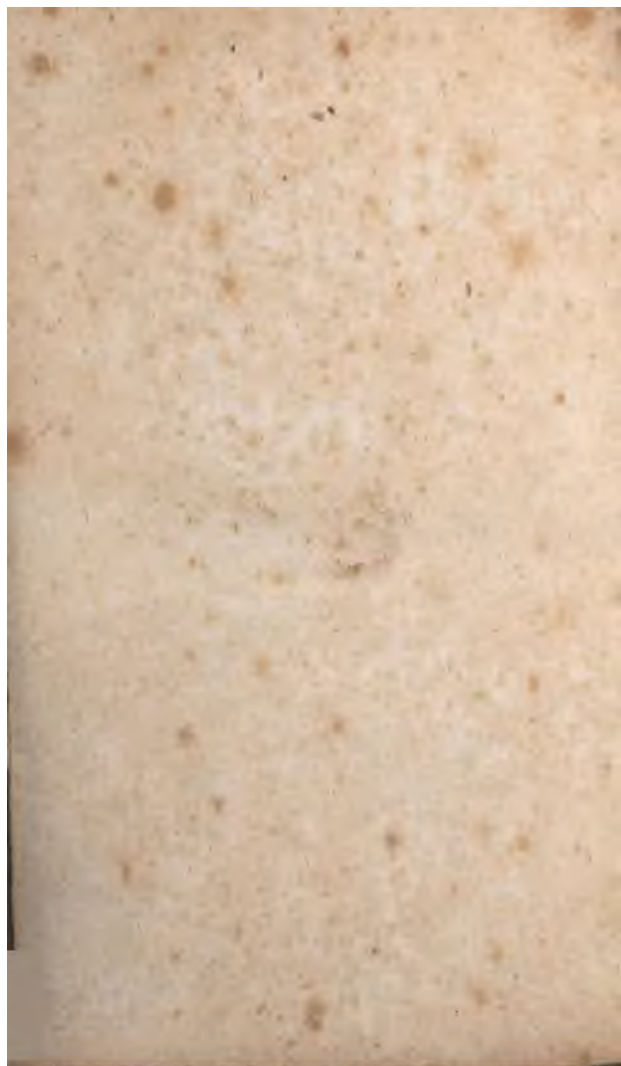












SLATE
AND
BLACK BOARD
EXERCISES,

BY WILLIAM A. *ALCOTT* ALCOTT,

Late Editor of Annals of Education, Confessions of a School
Master, &c. &c.

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CONTENTS.

| | Page |
|--|------|
| 51692 PREFACE, - - - - - | 5 |
| CHAPTER I.—Preliminary Remarks, - - - - - | 9 |
| CHAPTER II.—Forming lines, circles, &c., - - - - - | 15 |
| CHAPTER III.—Forming letters, and figures used in Arithmetic, - - - - - | 31 |
| CHAPTER IV.—Map Making, - - - - - | 39 |
| CHAPTER V.—Writing on the Slate, - - - - - | 46 |
| CHAPTER VI.—Spelling, - - - - - | 53 |
| CHAPTER VII.—Defining, - - - - - | 82 |
| CHAPTER VIII.—Composition, - - - - - | 95 |
| CHAPTER IX.—Reading, - - - - - | 110 |
| CHAPTER X.—Arithmetic, - - - - - | 124 |
| CHAPTER XI.—Geography, - - - - - | 141 |
| CHAPTER XII.—History, - - - - - | 162 |
| CHAPTER XIII.—Biography, - - - - - | 172 |
| CHAPTER XIV.—Grammar, - - - - - | 178 |
| CHAPTER XV.—Vocal Music or Singing, - - - - - | 195 |
| CHAPTER XVI.—Drawing, - - - - - | 197 |
| CHAPTER XVII.—Book-keeping, - - - - - | 206 |
| CHAPTER XVIII.—Miscellaneous Instructions, - - - - - | 214 |
| CHAPTER XIX.—Morality, - - - - - | 221 |

6-13-45 D.H.H.



P R E F A C E.

THE importance of the black board as an instrument of instruction in the common school, has been insisted on in every periodical on education which I have seen, either of this country or Europe; as well as in almost every recent treatise on the same subject. It has also been introduced into most of our improved schools, of every grade, especially in New England and New York. In many of our common schools, however, it has been but *barely* introduced. The teacher knows almost as little how to use it as his pupils. It is vain or nearly in vain that our more intelligent Committees and even the Secretaries of our Boards of Education urge the importance of its use, from year to year, so long as no instruction is given concerning its use.

It is in this view that I have prepared the following manual. It is, of course, not designed for pupils, but solely for teachers. Nor is it intended to be used blindly, even by teachers themselves. Let such only of its methods be tried as seem adapted to the circumstances of the teacher, and let even those be modified to meet the peculiar

iarities of his own school room. Hardly any mistake could be greater than for the teacher, who should take up a book like this, to adopt its various methods without reference to existing circumstances.

It is the object of the writer of the following work to make it worthy of being studied by teachers as *a system of slate and black board instruction*. Not indeed as a complete or perfect system, for it makes no such claims. It is a pioneer work, on the subject ; and undoubtedly contains many imperfections. It was ready for the press, and its contents submitted to the Secretary of one of our New England Boards of Education, before the little work of Mr. Bumstead, of Boston, called "The Black Board in the Primary School, and designed principally for instruction how to proceed in teaching Arithmetic" made its appearance. I have, however, added to Chap. XVII a few thoughts suggested by the work of Mr. B., for which this is intended as an acknowledgment.

Let it not, for one moment, be imagined that I am desirous of substituting slates and black boards for books and all other implements ; or a few lessons on these last, for hard study. Very far from it. What I would gladly do is to prepare the pupils of our common schools for the right *use of books, and proper benefits of study*. But

although the exercises which have been suggested are intended as preliminaries rather than principal things in a course of education, I have no doubt that much might be done towards securing a thorough English education, with nothing but the black board and slate, and a suitable course of oral instruction.

Should the teacher who takes up these "Exercises," attend to the suggestions I have made both in this preface, and in several of the chapters, and instead of following, mechanically, the *methods* which are pointed out, attend rather to the principles of which these exercises are intended as illustrations, and thus be led to form his own plans and methods, my object will be far more perfectly accomplished than if he should only transfer its scanty exercises to the black board, and there let the matter end. I say *scanty* exercises, for to present as many of these methods and exercises as some might desire, or at least as many as would suffice for the wants of the indolent, would require a volume of immense size; such as few teachers would buy, were it ever so desirable. To promote thought and progress, has been my object; believing that we have facilities enough already among us for the promotion of mechanism.

Let me add, in conclusion, that I shall be very much disappointed if the same instruments and

methods which might effect a revolution in our common schools, should be found useless in families. On the contrary, I believe they are even more valuable in the family than any where else. The truth is, that the family and the improvement and elevation of the family and the schools, can hardly be separated; they must stand or fall together.

Dedham, Ms., October, 1841,

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

A black board, in every school house, is as indispensably necessary as a stove or fireplace; and in very large schools several of them might be useful. They should, in general, be suspended on the wall, near the teacher's desk or platform, so as to be, like the latter, in full view of the whole school. Of course they ought to be moveable, that they may be hung up in any part of the house convenient. And though the largest may be six or eight feet long, and half as broad—and indeed the larger the better—it is certainly a convenience to have one or two so small and so light that they can be held in the arms like a slate.

Now the word *black board* need not awaken in our minds the thought of any thing difficult, rare, or costly. Why it is simply a *black board*. Is there any difficulty in painting a piece of board black? It is indeed desirable to have the board planed before it is painted, and to have it smooth and soft; but neither in this is there any thing very difficult and mysterious. The greatest difficulty to be encountered is that of finding a single board wide enough; for if we use several pieces, it requires some little tact to frame them to

gether in such a way as to have them answer a valuable purpose; though even this is not beyond the art of the mechanic.

Many have thought it better to paint black the whole end of the school room, near which the teacher's desk is placed. This would not be so *agreeable*, as a brighter color, nor perhaps, so well for the eye, unless indeed the house was exceedingly well lighted; nevertheless it might answer some purpose. A smaller portion of the wall, of suitable size, painted black,—say six or eight feet square of it—would, in my view, be preferable. In either case, however, one or more moveable black boards would be necessary, for reasons which will appear in the progress of these exercises.

Slates are as necessary as black boards, and even more so. But they are so liable to be broken, it will be said, as to render it expensive to parents to keep their children supplied with them. There would be weight in this objection were it not that this liability to injury can be for the most part prevented. 1st, by care on the part of the teacher to withhold the slates whenever the pupils are not sufficiently careful of them. 2, by having the frames made sufficiently strong. A simple band of cord, tin, or wire, round each corner, will greatly diminish the liability to injury from falling; but sheet iron fastened tightly around the corners of a good oak frame, is much better. Such preparation may seem a little costly at first; but if it were left to my choice to furnish a school with books or slates, as a means of employment, I should not hesitate on account of *the expense to furnish the latter*.

For let it be distinctly understood that no common school can thrive well, and the moral and physical character of the pupils be properly attended to, without furnishing the children with ample employment; and I repeat it, I know of no way of employing them so well as by means of slates and pencils. On this subject, moreover, I speak from considerable experience.

But are not books necessary at all, when the pupils are furnished with slates? I may be asked. Not for a large proportion of the children who attend our summer schools, nor for some of those who attend in the winter. To such I believe books are not only useless, but on the whole, worse than useless. As they advance in years, however, they may be indulged with a book, now and then, as a favor. Such a favor will not be esteemed a light thing; and will come in time, to be sought more frequently, and with more and more earnestness.

It is true we should not allow the pupils to have slates in their hands the whole time. Though it should be our aim to give them constant employment, yet their employment should be varied. Even the slate, if it were at their command continually, would become tiresome. To sit still, at times—entirely still—if not continued too long, is *one form of doing something*; and I consider it as much a part of the teacher's duty to form his pupils to the habit of sitting still, as to teach them spelling and reading. Not of course an hour at a time, or half an hour, or a quarter, even. To some children, five minutes would be long enough; and to most, ten minutes would be the full extent of what would be useful

But there are numerous other exercises which are useful to the young, in the school room; such as standing, marching, singing, &c.; to say nothing of exercises, at least every hour, out of it.

But having black boards and slates provided for a school, what shall be used on them—chalk, crayons, or pencils?

For the black board, a simple piece of chalk will answer very well. There is no objection, however, to what are called, by some, *port crayons*. These keep the chalk from the fingers, and of course from the clothes. By *port crayons*, I mean tin or brass tubes, about as large as a common crayon—or if a little larger, it would do no harm—with two slits at the end, into which a piece of chalk might be pushed, where by the elasticity of the tube, it would be retained with sufficient firmness.

For writing on slates, nothing is better, on the whole, than common pencils. As they are liable to be broken, however, the question has been raised, whether short pieces, which are not so readily broken, should be used, or whether larger ones are not preferable. My opinion is in favor, on the whole, of long ones; and for the following reasons. If the pencil is long, and of a texture sufficiently soft, it will not be difficult to teach the pupil to hold it as he would a pen; and thus he will be preparing to hold his pen properly whenever he comes to write on paper. But if the pencil is short, only an inch or two in length, it will, in all probability, be held in a very confined, awkward manner; and the pupil will be unfitting himself for holding a pen properly,

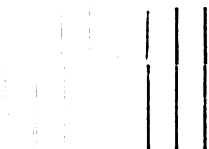
in time to come. I know well that the habit he acquires of contracting his fingers, around the pencil, can sometimes be broken ; but it is often carried through life.

To prevent them from being broken, the pencils may be wrapped in strong paper covered with paste, which should be well rolled round them and dried. As the pencil wears away, the paper and the stone may easily be cut away together. Or the *port crayons*, or handles for the chalk already mentioned, made a little smaller than a crayon—say about the size of a common quill—may be used ; in which case, a longer or shorter piece of pencil will serve the purpose, just as may happen to be convenient. The pencils or crayons should be attached to the slates loosely, by means of strings. In the case of the younger pupils, this will save them from being lost ; and in that of both the older and the younger, will prevent much confusion and noise. The desks of a school room should all be so constructed as to furnish a place for a slate. This, of course, would not prevent the teacher from taking the slates away from them whenever he should deem it best, especially those of the younger pupils.

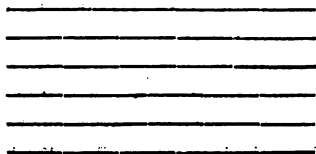
Perhaps it should be added that a piece of sponge to each slate, and a larger piece for the black board—or if not of sponge, of cloth or wash leather—is as necessary as the slate and black board. The teacher, moreover, needs something for a pointing stick.

I ought also to say here, that the preceding remarks, as well as those which follow, are made upon the presumption that every pupil of every

One of the first exercises should be that of making mere lines, parallel to each other, or vertical. I have thought that vertical lines were most readily made. Not that I would insist, at once, on an exact perpendicular to the line formed by the bottom of the slate or black board, but something as nearly approximating to this position as could reasonably be expected. They should have a copy on the black board, thus :



These I would teach them to make of different lengths and at differing distances ; and even in greater or less numbers. The teacher may have *variety* in the lessons, by merely varying the number of the marks. After writing these a few days, I would present to them a lesson of horizontals, to be copied, in like manner, on their slates, thus :



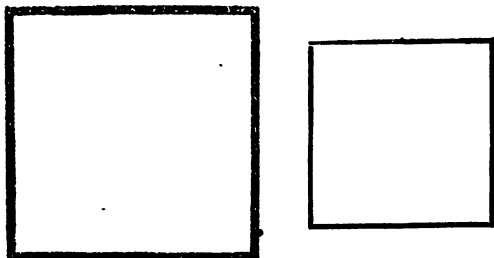
CHAPTER II.

FORMING LINES, CIRCLES, &c.

At first, it will be well for the small portion of each day in which very young pupils are allowed to have slates, to let them use them much in the way they please. Some will make one thing, some another. What they make is of comparatively little consequence, provided they attend, each to his own business, and do not interfere with that of others.

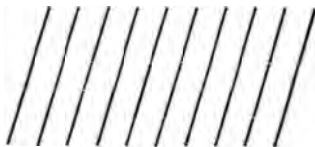
When a pupil has become somewhat familiar with the slate and pencil, he will esteem it a favor to be permitted to have a copy or lesson, and *do* something. Let him, then, have his lesson; and if there are others, so as to form a little class, so much the better.

The teacher may be the leader of the class, or he may employ an elder pupil for the purpose. In the outset, however, I like to have the wisdom of the teacher put in requisition, as much as may be; assistants or monitors will do better afterward.

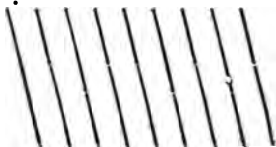


The parallelogram, or long square, is next ; and may be of different proportion and size, at different lessons. For I hardly need to say that in forming these squares the pupil is still perfecting himself in the art of making perpendiculars or verticals, and horizontals.

Oblique lines should come next in order, of which the following may be a specimen.

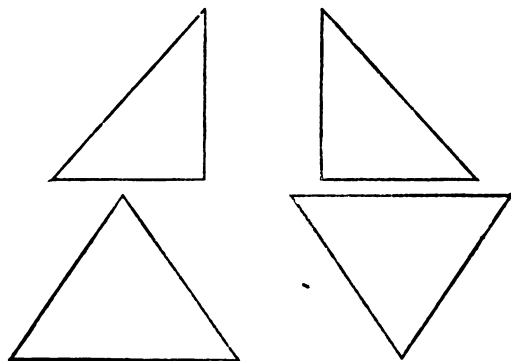


In another lesson the slope may be reversed, as in the following example.



These lessons being made sufficiently familiar, together with the parallelogram or long square, the pupil should proceed to combine the vertical and horizontal lines with oblique ones, to form triangles. Let me here say, however, that I would not give the names of these various lines and figures at first, at least as a part of the lesson. I would occasionally call them by their proper names, (as if without any particular intention,) but would not at first require them to remember them.

Here are some of the various triangles which I would present them for imitation, one at a time, beginning with those on the left hand.



Every intelligent teacher will see the reason for preferring the order above, as well as the propriety of placing but one of

the triangles on the black board, for imitation, at a time.

But we ought not to be tedious with young pupils at first. Whenever we find their attention beginning to waver, to any considerable extent, instead of insisting on their going on, from lesson to lesson, in this precise order, we should for a time substitute something else. Let them try to make the picture of a horse, or a dog, or a man, or of any thing else. But even in this case I should prefer to have a copy of the object which is to be imitated, placed on the black board.

One caution here may be necessary. It may not be advisable to exhibit to a whole school, on the *larger* black board, what only concerns a very few small pupils. I would here, therefore, at all events, employ an assistant or monitor; and having set the copy, on a smaller black board or slate, would require it to be held at a little distance before them.

It has been said, in a preceding paragraph that the teacher, should not, at first, give out the names of the various lines, figures, &c. which the pupils were required to make. The reason for this is that it will only tend to confound or perplex them. *One thing at a time* should be our rule, as much as the circumstances may admit. But as soon as *the lines and figures themselves* become

familiar, and the pupil is somewhat expert at making them, it will be well to teach him names. It may be done with advantage in the following manner.

Standing by the black board, with his chalk in his hand, the teacher observes ; Now, my scholars, I am to make some vertical lines, on the black board. How shall I make them ? Is this right ? at the same time making some which are either horizontal or oblique. No. No ; say several voices. " How then ? Is it so ? " making another wrong one. No. " Is it *so*, then ? " at the same time making the line as it ought to be. Yes.

Allow me, here, to make two remarks. One is, that it will be better, in many respects, to habituate the pupils, from the first, to signify their assent or dissent, their yes or no, by raising their hands. Such a practice will be especially necessary in a course of slate and black board instruction ; for it will both save much time, and prevent much disorder.

The other remark to be made is, that not a few teachers in pursuing this negative mode of instruction, both deceive themselves and defeat their own purposes. They wish to compel their pupils to *think* ; whereas, in fact, they *prevent* their thinking.

Take, for example, the case above. The teacher, on proposing to make a vertical line,

makes at first an oblique one, and then asks them to raise their hands, if they think it is right. No hands are raised. He then makes a horizontal line, and asks; "Is that right?" They signify that it is not. Then making a vertical line, he says, "Is that right?" in a tone of voice and with a manner, especially with an *emphasis*, which as fully convinces the pupils that he has *now* made the true line, as if he had said so, in plain words. I have often been astonished at the extent to which teachers deceive themselves, in this way. Without intending to tell the pupils that they have now done the real thing proposed, they certainly *do* tell them by their motions, their tones, or their emphasis; and no pupil who is attending to what they say, will mistake them.

But there is another common form of mistake. Many fall into the habit of asking a certain number of questions, say one or two or three, before they come to the right. Thus, in the case above, they would make one wrong mark, and the next, each pupil would know to be the right, because it was the teacher's uniform habit to refer to the right at the second question. In a thousand ways—certainly in very many—do teachers fall into habits which defeat their own purposes. It may be, too, that the pupils are sometimes deceived as well as the teacher; *mistaking that for their own—something*

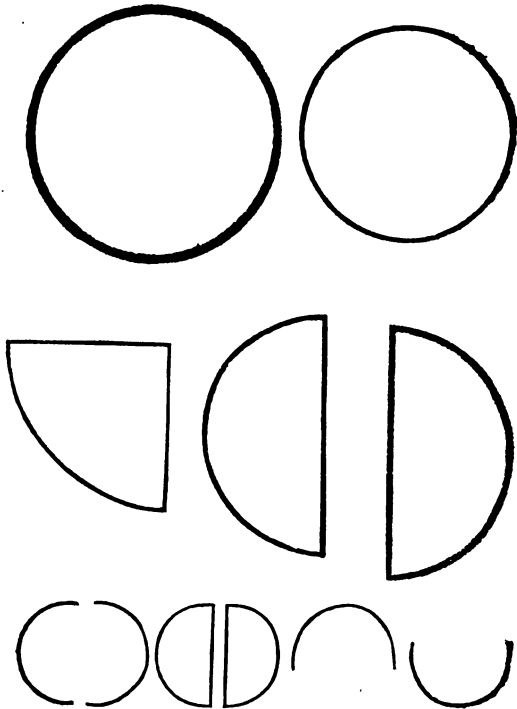
which their own minds have originated—which, in effect, they receive from the teacher, and is a mere echo of his opinion.*

He who is convinced of the truth of what is here affirmed, will take special pains to avoid falling into such an erroneous habit. He will endeavor to lead his pupils to *think* rather than to imitate, or decipher, or echo back *his own* thoughts. It is indeed one excellence of slate and black board and oral exercises, that there is not apt to be so much of the error alluded to, connected with these modes of instruction, as with many *other* modes. Still, as we have seen, there is *danger*, even here.

When horizontal, vertical, and oblique lines have been formed, from time to time, into squares, parallelograms, and the various sorts of right angled triangles, the pupil should be permitted to make circles of various sizes like the following ; beginning, of course, with the larger, and proceeding, at successive lessons, to the smaller.

He should also be required to make parts of circles ; of which I here present a specimen :

* Children are better *physiognomists*, at least they are better “discerners of the thoughts of the heart,” by the appearance of the countenance, than we are apt to regard them. What are conceived by many a teacher to be the children’s own cogitations or inventions, are very often the mere echo of his own heart or brain, or the plain indication of his manner, tone and emphasis.



Here, too, as in the former case, I would first teach them to make these various figures without their names ; and afterward apply the names, in the form of a review on the le^{re} at the black board ; as mention^{tion} other head.

We should not proceed farther with our pupils, at once, toward the region of drawing, than to teach them to make straight lines and circles, and their various combinations. It might be useful, however, to combine these, rather more vari- ously than has been thus far recommended. For example, I would add a triangle or a half circle to the top of a square. One of these I would say, when the class could pretty well imitate it, resembles a house, except that it has no chimney; can you tell me which it is?

They might also, indeed they should be taught to combine triangles in such a way as to make larger triangles and squares; and squares should be so combined as to make larger squares, and *if possible* other figures. Let the ingenuity of the pupils be particularly exercised, on this last point.

They may be asked, moreover, what objects, in the room or elsewhere, are square like the figure they have made on the slate; or what ones approximate closely to such or such a shape.

In this connection, they may be led to see that a circle faintly, though but faintly, represents the sun, the moon, a button, a piece of money, a plate, a bason, the face of a clock or a watch, a ring, &c. The human face, an eye, &c. may be referred to, and the pupils may be told what is meant by elliptical and oval.

As the subject becomes more and more familiar, and the mind of the pupil advances, he may be taught to form many other geometrical figures. On this subject—that of teaching what may be called the elements of geometry to very young children, as well as for the sake of practical illustration—I am disposed, for once, to fortify my opinion by authority. The late Rev. Joseph Emerson, whose talents and skill as a teacher are known throughout New England, has the following remarks :*

“Geometry, in its nature, is one of the primary studies. It may be understood by itself without the knowledge of any other branch, except a very little of language and arithmetic; while scarcely any other branch can be well understood without some acquaintance with Geometry.

“It is my opinion that the child should commence the study of Geometry before learning the alphabet. He is not, indeed, prepared to encounter the elements of Euclid; but he can clearly comprehend some of the distinguishing properties of a straight line and a curve; of a circle, a triangle, a square, and an ellipse; of a cube and of a sphere. As the subject becomes

* See “Prospectus of the Female Seminary at Wethersfield, Connecticut,” for the year 1826, a pamphlet of about 60 closely printed pages; and one which is, in itself, quite a *complete manual* for teachers.

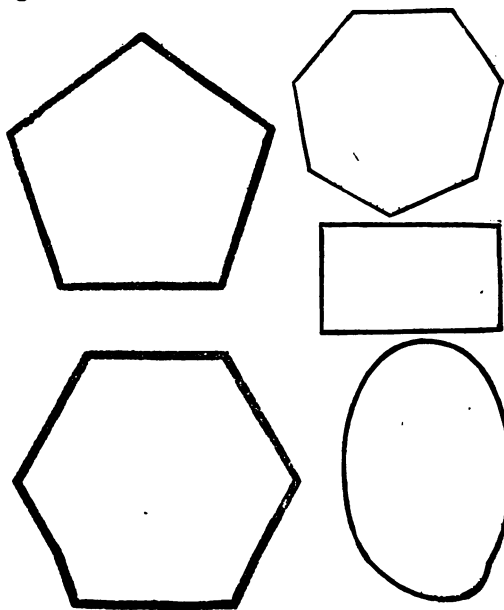
familiar, and his mind strengthens, he is able to understand some of the distinguishing properties of a pentagon, hexagon, heptagon, &c. ; of the different kinds of triangles ; of an oblate and prolate spheroid ; of a parallelopiped, of a prism, of a cone, and of pyramids. He may then go back to the circle, and attend to its properties, more particularly in the consideration of arcs, chords, segments, sector, radii, diameters, sines, tangents, degrees, minutes, seconds, the mariner's compass, &c., &c. He may then proceed to a more particular consideration of angles, triangles, squares, &c., &c."

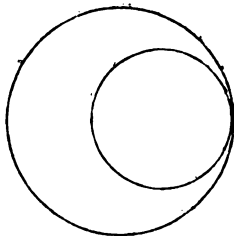
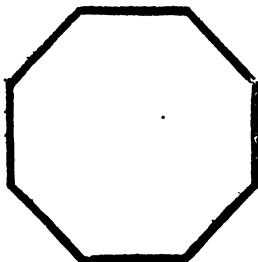
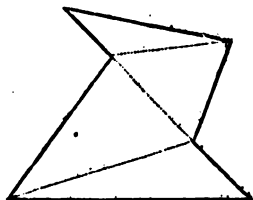
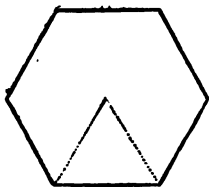
Nothing, it is true, is here said about the slate and black board ; but if these things are to be taught, at an early age, there can be no doubt that the slate and black board are most happily calculated to aid in the work.

Following out, then, on the black board and slates,—at least in some good degree—the ideas which Mr. Emerson has suggested, the pupils should be taught the pentagon, hexagon, heptagon, and octagon ; as well as be led to some general ideas of arcs, segments, diameters, and the like. We should be exceedingly careful, however, not to fatigue our pupils, especially at first, with hard names. The name of the plainest, most common figures, may, indeed, be taught them, but not so with the more difficult.

Perhaps, in the progress of this kind of instruction, it would be an excellent plan to give out a lesson on the black board, in which circles of various size might be said to resemble certain round, but very different objects. Thus the first circles might represent the sun ; the next, a little smaller, the moon ; another or two, very small, and perhaps a little gibbous, some of the stars.

The following might be drawn on the black board as specimens of combining both right lines and others.





Again, at another lesson, the first or larger *square* might be said to represent the floor of the room, the second, (very small, in proportion,) the table ; a third very small also, and rather oblong, a book. Again, on another occasion, but by no means at the same time, let the largest square represent the common, or some open field, well known to them all ; the second in size should represent some garden, equally well known ; a third the play ground, or the spot of ground on which the house stands, &c.

But to return to circles. This figure, says the teacher, represents the clock face; and that the watch. Now, on this largest one, I will put letters like those on the clock. If the pupils are none of them quite prepared to *imitate* him, his efforts to please them will at least afford them a good deal of amusement. So would an attempt of the same sort to represent the mariner's compass.

One exercise more may be mentioned, under this head. I allude to the combination of various portions of circles with each other, and with right lines, in order to prepare the way for making, ere long, the letters of the alphabet. To a vertical or perpendicular line, for example, they may be shown how to add one or two semicircular lines. First one, in this way, D; or in this P; or in this, B. Secondly, two half circles may be added, as in this case, B.

Some might be apprehensive that the last mentioned exercise would degenerate into mere play. This depends much on the spirit and manner of the teacher. In proper hands, however, no such result need be apprehended. Few go so far towards this extreme as to be exposed to any considerable degree of danger.

CHAPTER III.

FORMING LETTERS, AND THE FIGURES USED IN ARITHMETIC.

The pupil is presumed to be ready, at length, for instruction in making the letters. As the first step, we should select such capital letters (for I would begin with the capitals on account of their mathematical shape) as can be made from the simple elementary lines with which the child is already acquainted.

Perhaps the most simple letter to begin with is I. Next to this, however, may follow L, H, T, Z, E and F. Not at once, of course, but in succession; and only one of them at a time. I would not proceed to a second, till the pupil was somewhat familiar with the first.

Next to these might follow those made up, in part or in whole, of circles. First O; then Q and C; and then D, P, B, R and G. And lastly would follow those which are more irregular, in two classes; first, W, V, A, K, M, N, X and Y; and secondly J, S and U. At first, I would

form no combinations of these, nor even teach them their names, but soon proceed to the smaller letters, teaching them in a similar manner ; that is beginning with the more simple in form, and going on to the more difficult and complicated. Thus o, i, s, v, w, x, z, &c., are among the more easy to be imitated ; while a, g, r, y, &c., are more difficult. These small letters, moreover, should be written by the teacher, on the black board very large. It is no matter if they are six times as large as they usually appear in the pages of a common book. The reason of this is that they may be seen distinctly, by the pupils ; and be more easily imitated. They will, of course, be apt to make them somewhat smaller than the copy.

It is, important that considerable time should be spent in these last exercises ; especially in making the small letters. The benefits to be obtained thereby are numerous. Let me observe however, that in teaching children to make the small letters—though not the large ones—we should in proceeding, give them their names, requiring them to remember them. Thus when we have written v on the black board, we should say ; now we are all going to write *vec* ; and after the letter is made or attempted—Now how many of you know what the name of this letter is ? As many as do will

raise their hands, &c. Thus should we proceed through the whole alphabet.

It may interest the pupils also, to know that many of the small letters, no less than the larger ones, are made up essentially of parts of circles. This is the case with a, b, c d e g p q and s.

There will be nothing lost in spending considerable time in teaching the young, or even those who are a little older, to make the letters of the alphabet with a good deal of accuracy; not only the small ones, but the large ones also. In doing this I would proceed in the manner indicated on page 21; remembering, at the same time, the cautions which were there thrown out. I would however, first teach them, whether singly or by classes, those which are most alike—those which could be, most naturally associated. Thus if we set them a lesson on the black board, consisting of several different letters, it should be made up of such as very much resemble each other, rather than of those whose resemblance is less apparent. L, I, T, H, &c., consist wholly of vertical and horizontal lines; W, V, A, &c., of oblique and horizontal ones; O, Q, S, and a o s and g wholly of curved lines; and may therefore be properly classed together, whenever classification is indispensable.

Many weeks—I had almost said many months—may be spent, and I doubt not

with profit, in writing the small letters, either alone, or in combination with others. For variety's sake, if for no other reason, I would however, sometimes bring together a combination of these—such an one as had some meaning, as dog, sot, cat, kite, nose. This would be, it is true, a slight departure, for the time, from the principles I have just laid down—of classification—nevertheless, as a temporary expedient, I have no doubt of its advantages.

Two or three important objects would be accomplished by spending considerable time in this way. First the letters would be likely to be well learned. To those, indeed, who prefer, the new fashioned mode of teaching whole words, before they are analyzed, or before we give them the names of the parts of which they are composed, this reason would have but little weight. Nevertheless, nearly all our school-books are constructed with reference to the old mode of teaching letters before words; and as it is likely this will be the more usual mode of instructing in our common schools for many years to come. I have at least proceeded in these exercises upon that supposition or expectation.

Secondly, the pupils will be acquiring, all this while—that is if they are attended to—the habit of properly holding and using a pencil; and this preparation for the future, *must of course* be attended to somewhere.

Thirdly, they will be preparing to learn to spell, read and write. I know it will be doubted by some, whether such exercises actually prepare the way for writing; but this point will be made more clear in another place.

One useful exercise to the young, at every stage of their instruction, especially at this very early stage, is that of requiring them to distinguish the size, shape, &c., of objects, such as circles and letters; and trace resemblances. Too much importance, as it seems to me, can hardly be attached to this exercise. I will therefore present a few illustrations.

The teacher writes, on the black board, the letters o and c. Now how many of you, he says, can tell me the difference between these two letters? The true difference between them is then pointed out. So of e and c; s, and z; i and y; and m and n.

What is the name of this? says the teacher; at the same time making a large circle on the black board. What is this? making at the same time a small one. You say, he adds, that they are both circles; are they both then alike? How many think they are different. Will some of you tell me the difference?

The teacher makes a triangle and a circle. What is the name of the first? What of

the second? Are they alike? How ~~do~~^{do} they differ? Is there any other difference?

"From what is the letter i made up? Of vertical lines, horizontals, or circles? The letters w and v? The letters o c and e? The teacher writes b on the black board. Addressing himself to a particular individual, he says, "I see your hand is raised; you may tell us." A perpendicular line and a circle, is the reply. "Is it a *whole* circle, or a *part* of one?" A part.

"I will now make three letters, on the black board," says the teacher; at the same time making W V and A. "What do these letters most resemble—triangles, squares, or circles?" What do these three most resemble, C G and Q. Here are two, X and Y what do these most resemble?"

"What is the difference between W and V? How many can tell me? What is the difference between V and A? What is the difference between M and N? What between P and B? Which is made up from a perpendicular line, a horizontal, and part of a circle? Which from a perpendicular, and part of two circles? Of what sort of lines is Z made? How does Z differ from N?"

But as I have elsewhere said, I would dwell most on the small letters, and the nine *figures or digits*. I would question the pupils

all the small letters, the teacher should proceed to teach them how to make digits, as they are sometimes called, mean the characters used in arithmetic. With these, as with the alphabet, proceed, slowly and cautiously; observing, as much as possible, the order which requires us to do but one thing at a time.

But would you pass over the large letters and not name them at all? some may perhaps ask. I do not think it *necessary* to name them; indeed, I think it confuses them to find there are two n's for example, strikingly different as our large and small one. The names of the large letters are acquired by degrees, as the pupil advances to writing, spelling, defining, reading. I have taught multitudes of children

vious, at a glance, is principally a vertical line; the second and third are made up, essentially, of two circles each. Four of the others, 2 5 6 and 9, are made of chiefly of parts of circles; and 4 and 7 of right lines; either horizontals or verticals.

It is hoped that these exercises, in teaching the Alphabet, and the figures used in Arithmetic, will not be regarded as tedious or unnecessary. I believe that, if the plan which is here suggested is not the *very best*, it is at least *one* of the best which has ever yet been attempted. At all events it is infinitely better than the equally long road which the tyro was once compelled to travel without taking much interest in what he was doing. But whether the best method or not of merely *learning the Alphabet* (that it is the most rapid I do not pretend) one thing is certain, viz. that children are interested in it, and that it affords them, for a time, full employment. But it has an advantage greater still. It is an excellent preparation for the studies, which in the usual course of an English education, ordinarily follow.

CHAPTER IV.

MAP MAKING.

The idea of placing map making next in order to the alphabet, may be thought a little singular by many teachers. They have been accustomed to regard *Geography*, they will say, as coming in at a much later period.

But it is not geography, properly so called, which I propose to introduce here; but only an exercise which is preparatory to geography. Nor do I propose to teach even map making to any considerable extent just now, but only to make a beginning; for which purpose I suppose this to be the most appropriate place.

The exercises of Chapter II. were a means, among other things, of preparing the way for map making. In fact some of them may be considered as little less than first steps in this important art. Such, in particular, was that of representing the common, the play ground, the school room and the table, by means of so many squares.

There can be little doubt that in making

maps, if not in the study of geography itself, the best way is to begin at home. Indeed, at the present day, this is a point conceded by nearly every intelligent and successful teacher; and not a few of our school geographies are constructed with reference to this important principle.

Having *initiated* the pupil, I would set him to making maps of the school room, and of other rooms, places, and things, in good earnest. In making a map of the school room, he should be taught to mark the places where some of the principal things stand, such as the stove and teacher's desk; as well as the places occupied by the doors and windows.

The teacher will, of course, lead the way in this exercise on the black board. After drawing the outlines of the room, he will say, "What shall I place here?" pointing to the spot where it will be obvious to some of them, if not to all, must be the place for the stove, or the teacher's desk. If they raise their hands in token that they know, he then asks some one. Suppose it is the stove which is to be located, and it stands on the south side of the room. He next asks, putting down his pencil on the opposite or northern side, at the place which should indicate the spot on which the desk stands; "What shall we put here?" The *answer is elicited* in the same way as be-

fore, and the place of the desk is accordingly marked on the map. "What shall I put down here? How many of you can tell?" All raise their hands. Addressing himself to a particular pupil, he says, "You may tell us." Of the door, in like manner, he asks; "Where shall it be placed? Where shall I put the southwest window? Where the northwest?" &c.

Next to a map of the school-room, should be a map of the school-house. There are few school-houses which contain no more than barely the school-room. Most of them contain an entrance and clothes room; some a wood room; and a few have one or more recitation rooms. All these should be marked off, on the map; first on the black board, and then on the slates. For whatever is worth preparing on the black board, by the teacher and the pupils conjointly, is usually worth copying by the pupils upon their slates. In any event, all maps, how much soever the pupils have had to do in assisting the teacher to prepare them, should be transferred to their slates.

If there is a play ground regularly enclosed, in connection with the school-house, a map of this should come next. If not, the pupils may be required to make a map of the road near the school-house, or of some open space or common, if there is one near by, with which they are all familiar. Next

to the map of a play ground, that of the road near the school-house is usually most interesting to children. It affords, in general, a greater number of important parts, such as here a tree, there a brook or a bridge; there a house; there a shed; there a well; there a barn; there the beginning of another road, &c.

When the pupils of any school can copy from the black board, maps of the school-room, the school-house, and the road, and tell the points of compass with relation to each map, the teacher may require of them to draw on their slates, without having any thing to do with the black board, a map of their father's house, or garden, or the road near it. Of course, neither he nor any one of his pupils may be able to correct the errors of each, in all particulars; though it will usually happen that there will be somebody in the school who will be able to make the necessary corrections. The exercise, in any event, is one of the most valuable that can be given.

From a map of the road near the school-house, they may proceed to a map of the other roads, not far distant, especially if there is any thing striking near or on the road; as a church, factory, tavern, prison, or store. With the aid of the teacher, who must, of course, lead the way on the black board, the pupils of a school might be

taught to make maps of most of the roads and streets throughout the region where they were brought up, as well as of most of the fields adjoining them, near the school-house and their respective homes.

The next step in the natural progress of things is to a map of the town. This is always exceedingly interesting to the young. For though it cannot be *very large*, on a single black board, nor so large on the slates as on the black board, yet there will be room enough, in general, for the principal public roads in town, with all the streams, large and small, and the lakes, ponds, and mountains, if any exist. This putting down the brooks and ponds, with which many of the pupils must be more or less familiar, is not only exceedingly interesting, but it prepares the way for the right preparation and understanding of other maps.

From a map of the town, the teacher will proceed to draw a map of some three or four, or five adjoining towns, with their own town in the centre. Further than this exercise it would, I think, be premature, to require the pupils to go. He may indeed go on and make a map of the county, the state, &c.; but not as a lesson for the pupils, but only to prepare the way for the future.

Before going so far as a map of the county in which the pupil resides, there is another exercise which may be commenced here.

though it cannot or at least ought not to be carried to any considerable extent, until the pupil is fairly inducted into the study of geography. I refer to the use of dissected maps. In pursuance of the present plan, I would first draw on paper the outlines of the towns immediately adjoining that in which the pupils and teacher were, including of course their own town; and then cut them apart, precisely on the town lines. These it should be the business of the pupil to bring together again into their original shape and relative position.

At the same time, however, a map made by the teacher on the black board will be desirable; for young pupils find it more difficult, at first, to put a dissected map together than we may be aware; and will not be directed too much, by the black board. Afterward however they may be required to unite them properly *without* the black board.

They will not proceed far, in these various processes, before they should be required, one at a time, to come to the black board and draw maps on that, to be corrected by the class after they have finished. They should begin with the most simple; because although they were able to do something more on their own slates, yet when called to stand before the whole school, and with the recollection too, that they may

be criticised by them, most pupils will be at first a little embarrassed.

A dissected map of the whole county seems to be the next thing in order unless the county were remarkably large ; in which case I would omit it, and pass on to a dissected map of the States of the Union. The towns, unless in one's own county, and that county of very moderate size, are such small divisions, that it is hardly advisable to attempt to put together the towns of a whole state ; except perhaps those of such small states as Rhode Island and Delaware.

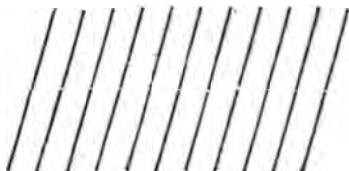
But I would not at once push the work of map making very far. I would leave it for the present, and attend awhile to writing ; or rather to the formation of letters and words mechanically.

d*

CHAPTER V.

WRITING ON THE SLATE.

The first lesson in what I have here called slate writing—by which, however, I mean the mere mechanical formation of letters and words—is a lesson of oblique lines. They may be of greater or less length; especially at different lessons; but I have thought that, for beginners, about three-fourths of an inch was sufficient. Thus,



The slope and distance from each other, I should regard of more consequence than any thing else, especially the slope. After a few lessons of that sort,* from the black board, I would teach the *lower curve* of letters. In other words I would teach them to

* This exercise was anticipated in Chap II., so that a few lessons only in this place will be necessary.

make the *i* or *l*, and also to join it, as follows; except on a larger scale.

mmmm mmm

When pupils are familiar with the lower curve of letters, and can form the *i t l b* and *u* separately, and afterward join them, thus; *iulbu*—or rather, thus; *iulb*—I would proceed to form the reverse of this—the upper curve thus *lll* and to join it, thus—*mmmm*. This done, the double curve comes next, and forms a portion of the *h*, the *m*, the *n*, and the *v*. Lastly, I would teach the *o*; from which are derived, in part or in whole, *c d e g q* and *x*.

They need not be troubled long, with these elementary lessons. They are better adapted to writing on paper; to come in sometime afterward. Still I would proceed a while upon system, even on the slate. Where we lose nothing by being systematic, system is always preferable. It is valuable on its own account; but it is still more valuable as a matter of mental discipline.

When a child can form the greater part of the small letters, both singly and in combination, it will be well to employ him in putting words together. Writing the first elements—the *l, i, r, o*, and *j*—on the black board, the teacher should inquire of the pupils, from which of these he must

make the letter *i*. Is it from the first, the second, the third, the fourth, or the fifth? Being told it must be made from the second, he accordingly makes it, and then asks, Is it finished? What is to be added?

Perhaps it is hardly necessary to say that the pupils should have time allowed them, in every instance, to write on their slates, what the teacher first writes on the black board. I mean, by this, that they should not be hurried too much.

“From which of these” the teacher asks “shall I make the *t*? Is there nothing to be added? What is to be added? How does *t*, thus made, differ from *i*? Does it differ from it, in nothing except its length? What do I call the turn of the *i* and *t*, at the bottom?” (This question presumes that the terms upper curve, lower curve, &c. have been explained.)

From which of them shall I make the letter *m*? How many of each—the third and fourth—must I take? Which must I take, and how many, to make *n*, *w*, *v*, *h*? Is there nothing added to the fourth to make *v*? What is added to make *w*? What is added to the third to make *r*? What to the second to make *l*?

Here I would have a sort of review. How does *m*, differ from *n*? Both letters should be standing on the black board when this question is asked. So should any others

between which the teacher attempts to make a comparison. How does *w* differ from *v*? How does *l* differ from *b*? How does *i* differ from the half of a *u*? How do *i* and *l* differ? How do *i* and *t*, &c.?

It is not difficult to show a pupil that the first half of the *a d g* and *g*, with *c* and *e*, are essentially the same as the *o*; the only difference, in any case, being derived from a very slight omission or addition. Nor will it be difficult, after a pupil has learned to form all the regular letters, such, I mean, as can be chiefly made from a few single elements like the foregoing, to teach him to make a few irregulars; such as *s*, *x*, and *z*.

Nor will there be much difficulty about the *capitals*. Even these, however, for the convenience of the teacher, may be classed. Thus three or four of them are essentially a part of the letter *O*, somewhat enlarged; as *C*, *E*, *G*, and *X*. A still larger class, a very large one, are formed essentially from the main stroke of the *I*. Thus, *B*, *D*, *F*, *H*, *L*, *P*, *R*, *S*, *T*, and *Z*, are all of this description. Then *A*, *M*, *N*, and *W*, form another small class by themselves, which are soon and easily imitated. These three classes comprise nearly the whole alphabet of large letters; there are only a very few irregulars.

That which delights me most in connection with these exercises is that instead of

being irksome to the pupils, they are to them, almost like pastimes ; and they are sometimes as sorry to have them at an end, as if they were really such.

Let it be remembered, however, that it is not so much the object—at least I think it ought not to be—to teach writing, as an art, on the slate, as to teach it in a sort of imitative way, in order to prepare the pupil for several other important exercises which should precede the exercise of writing on paper.

There is one exercise which if pursued simultaneously with the foregoing, would greatly enhance the interest of the pupil, to say nothing of the profit which might accrue. I refer to a little device sometimes resorted to—that of cutting out from paste-board, or paper, five or six elementary principles of letters, and requiring the pupil to combine them, to form letters. He must, it is true, have a considerable number of each ; but they are soon and easily made. By putting them together, however, I do not mean attaching them to each other in any way, but simply laying them side by side, contiguous to one another, on the desk or table.

The exercises of the chapters which follow, pursued according to the suggestions which accompany them, and taken along

with the elementary studies of this chapter* will be likely, in nine cases in ten, to make the pupils of a school very good writers; better I dare say, without ever having any thing to do in school with pen and ink, than the average of our common school writers. This is not saying that pen and ink should never be used, for they should, without doubt. But these exercises, instead of standing in the way of the subsequent use of pen, ink and paper, would, if studied as they ought to be, and as has been recommended, greatly facilitate the pupil's progress. Yet I still say that even if he should never receive any direct instruction of this sort in school, he could not fail, from such a long practice with his pencil and slate, and from such varied exercises, to become a very tolerable writer.

If any one should doubt—I know there are a few who do—whether children will ever become good writers, from merely practicing on the slate, we need not refer him to Iceland, for proof, where all children learn in a manner not unlike that, and never or almost never in any way which is more systematic. We have only to send him to some of our schools for the instruction of

* They have the effect of a daily review, in the matter of hand writing; and frequent reviewing the studies of school, is, as every teacher of much experience knows, the only means of making much real progress.

the deaf and dumb, where many are to be found who write elegantly on slates, and who never yet wrote on any thing else. We have testimony on the same subject, however, in Wood's account of the Sessional School in Edinburgh, and in the Connecticut Common School Journal. I have myself seen very young pupils, in common schools—say not more than six or seven years of age—who already wrote a very good hand, on the slate, though they had never written a word with pen and ink in their lives.

We are now prepared, as I trust, for the important school exercise of spelling. At present—I mean on the old system—we have but very few persons among us who spell well; let us see whether slate and black board exercises promise any thing better.

CHAPTER VI.

SPELLING.

Few things belonging to a good English Education seem to be of more importance than correct Spelling. I shall therefore treat of this subject at considerable length.

As in other things, so it is in teaching spelling; we may, first, instruct the whole school, at once; or secondly we may instruct portions of it, as classes or individuals; or thirdly, the instruction may be given by means of certain older pupils, acting on our behalf, as monitors or assistants; or as they are sometimes, and not unaptly called *word givers*.

The methods of teaching spelling, with the aid of slates and black boards, are almost innumerable. I shall select some four or five only; such as seem to me to be among the best. Those which I have selected, will be found applicable, to the existing condition of most, if not all of our common schools.

First Method. The teacher takes his position by the black board, with the whole

school, or the class, as the case may be, facing him, and after ascertaining that he has secured the attention of all, proceeds with his chalk in hand, to write down a spelling lesson.

But what shall he write? What word shall he begin with? For there is certainly a choice to be exercised; it is not a matter of entire indifference what words are written down. It must be obvious to all who reflect that the selection should be made with reference to the wants and capacities of the pupils.

We will suppose, for the present, that they are just beginning to spell; having previously learned to read and write letters, and to make the figures used in Arithmetic, with a few of the simpler geometrical figures. In such a case the words of the lesson should be selected on the general principle of beginning at home—i. e. with words with the meaning of which the pupil is already partially or wholly acquainted.* Such are slate, pencil, book, paper, stove, stove pipe, fire, coal, ashes, ink, inkstand, fire-place, hand, eye, ear, face, mouth, window, door, table, chair, wall, &c. Such

* Some have thought that the first words selected for a child to spell or read, should be all short words—monosyllables. But it has seemed to me otherwise. I know no reason why a young pupil may not as well and as easily be taught to spell inkstand or stove pipe, as a great many of the monosyllables, which are usually presented to him.

words as ceiling, and crayon, I would, at first, omit; for although they are *near* enough, they are much more difficult, and may be deferred to a subsequent lesson.

"I will now write the word *slate*," the teacher says. "What letter shall I make first? Let all who know, raise their hands." Addressing himself to a particular individual, the teacher says, "You may name it." The pupil says "S." The teacher writes it, i. e. in the printed form. "What shall I write next?" he says. The answer being obtained, in the same way as before, he proceeds to the next; then to the next; and so on till the word is wholly written.

This is, indeed, a simple word, and a very simple process; but neither the word nor the process is too simple to begin with. It need not be a *slow* process, especially after a beginning is fairly made. On the contrary, it may be conducted, where all are attentive and interested, with very great rapidity.

But it may happen that a pupil will name a wrong letter. For example, in reply to the question, what shall be written as the fourth letter in the word *slate*, a pupil may say, i. "Is that right?" the teacher inquires of the class. Some one who raises his hand, in token of assent, may then be asked what letter ought to be substituted for the i. The truly ingenious teacher

however, will often select, in his inquiry, the more inattentive or heedless pupils, in order to secure their close attention to the exercise.* Or he may write the letter i, according to the wrong direction of the pupil; and if no one should question its correctness, by uplifted hand, he may go through with writing the word; and then after telling the class that a mistake has been made, or that he has been directed wrong, he may require them to correct it.

He then proposes another word, as *hand*; proceeding with it in the same manner as with the word *slate*. Though he should go slowly, endeavoring to have every process understood, he should nevertheless go strait forward, and avoid if possible, the loss of any time. The list of words may be extended, as circumstances seem to require. The first lessons, ought by all means, to be short; keeping in view the general and very important principle, never to fatigue or satiate the pupil, especially when setting out with a new subject of study. When the lesson is completed, let each pupil copy or transfer the words from the black board to his slate.

One or two important principles, in the beginning of such an exercise as this, should

* When I say *often*, I do not mean *always*; for this practice would produce a set of evils which would tend to defeat its own purpose.

never be lost sight of. First, the exercise, in all its processes or parts, should be simple. Do *one thing at a time*, as much as possible. Let the propriety of using capitals, here ~~and~~ there, the character or quality of the hand writing of the pupils, with size, slope, and almost every thing else, be overlooked, at first, for the sake of simplicity. Secondly, be not too particular about classifying or assorting the words with reference to length, number of syllables, or any thing else. Classification is a work which belongs to a more advanced stage of progress.

Although the teacher should, in general, confine himself to one thing at a time, yet after the school or class become somewhat familiar with the method, and with a considerable number of words, it may be well to make an occasional departure from this rule ; more, however, for the sake of variety than for any other reason.

Thus, suppose he were about to write down the word slate, as the beginning of a spelling lesson. He will say to his pupils, "Now, in order to write the word, must I begin at the top or at the bottom of the black board ? Why at the top, rather than any where else ? You will tell me also that I must begin at one side of the slate ; now at which side ; the right hand side, or the left ? Why at the left hand rather than the right ?

Must I write horizontally, or obliquely? (This last question takes for granted that the terms horizontal, &c. are well understood.) Must the word begin with a small s, or a large one?"

This, I say, is designed as a mere specimen of the little departures which a teacher may properly make, at times, from his general rule of going strait forward. Any thing of the same general character with the foregoing, which while it serves to impart interest, is also in itself instructive, will be of evident advantage.

There is another way of proceeding which may occasionally be resorted to. Thus, in the example above, the teacher, after having announced to the class that he is about to write the word *slate* on the black board, proceeds to write it, without asking any questions at first; but writes it wrong. Instead of *slate*, he writes *slaet*, or *slait*, or *slat*. Or instead of writing it horizontally, he writes it obliquely. The pupils are then called upon to say whether it is written correctly; and if not, in what respects it is wrong. So of any other common word; as pencil, door, chair, table, coal, &c.

It has been said that after the teacher has completed a list of words on the black board, the pupils should be required to transfer them to their slates. The object of
 ' two fold; first to fix the orthography

of the word more firmly in the memory ; and, secondly, as an exercise in the art of writing.

That the first of these results will inevitably follow, no one who is at all acquainted with children or with the structure of his own mind, will, for a moment, doubt. Nothing, certainly, is more common than for a child of good memory to learn to repeat a hymn or song, from beginning to end, merely by copying it.

To secure the second result—that of improving the hand-writing—our pupils should be required, in copying any thing, to do it as well as possible. In writing down words from mere hasty dictation, it is true, this can hardly be expected ; on account of the difficulty, especially with children, of doing two things *well*, at the same time. But in mere copying, I say again, it is not only useful but highly desirable ; nay I might almost say indispensable. As a necessary preliminary, the word on the black board—the copy set by the teacher—should be written in the best possible manner. Marks of haste or carelessness, and above all of absolute incorrectness, cannot fail to have a bad effect. This seasonable hint to teachers, will not, I hope, be overlooked or forgotten. Let them remember the maxim of Cousin, the French philosopher ; “ As is the teacher so is the school ;” and let them ~~re~~

member that the remark is applicable even to the hand-writing of the teacher.

In this way, that is by a species of review, will the pupil retain and perfect his skill in the art or practice of writing. There will be so many exercises in which he will be liable to forget himself and write carelessly, that a special effort here and there, at least when merely copying something, will be indispensably necessary.

Second method. This consists in pronouncing or dictating words to the pupils, to be written down by them, on their slates. In this exercise the use of the black board is not absolutely necessary; although it can be used, if desired.

In pronouncing or dictating words, great care should be taken to give to every syllable, and even to every letter, its natural sound. In this respect there is a great deal of error among us, and it is likely there will be a great deal more, unless teachers beware of the bad habits in which most of them have been educated.

One of the more common errors of the class to which I allude is that of spelling the words for the pupil, in the act of pronouncing them. It is by no means uncommon for teachers to pronounce the words of a spelling lesson in such a manner, that they cannot avoid spelling them correctly, *if they would*. Thus I have heard positive

and *fugitive*, pronounced *pos-i-tive* and *fu-gi-tive*. That is instead of giving the vowels of the second and third syllables of these words a short sound, they were sounded long. And worse than even this, I have heard the word above, pronounced *ab-ove*; as if the *o* had its long full sound.

Let all these and other kindred errors, in pronunciation be studiously avoided. Let every word be pronounced right, (that is as it should be pronounced in good conversation or reading,) whether the pupils spell it correctly or not. And if, in dictating words to smaller classes, an elder pupil, or *word giver*, is employed, the teacher should be exceedingly careful that he does not lead them into errors of the same sort, or of some other kind. In general, these assistant pupils, or word givers, ought either to be *drilled* by the teacher before hand, or to receive from him, for their own use, exclusively, a written or printed list of the words they are about to teach. For this last purpose they may be permitted, at times, to select words from a given table or page of a spelling book, or from a dictionary.

There are several ways of ascertaining whether pupils write their words from dictation—that is to say *spell* them—correctly or not. One is by employing the word *giver* in going round to them all and examining their slates separately, and comparing

them with his own, or the standard list. Another is, for the teacher to perform the same service. Another is, to have each pupil read over, or rather spell over the words, in an audible voice; the teacher stopping him and making corrections, should any be necessary. Another way, still, is, for the teacher himself, to correct the list of the right hand or left hand pupil, (according to his own convenience or choice,) and then for that pupil whose slate he holds, to receive and correct the slate of his next neighbor; and so on, through the class.

In general, however, it is better that the correctness or incorrectness of the pupils should be settled by some higher authority than that of a fellow pupil. On this account, I should prefer the second or third method of the preceding paragraph, were it not that as soon as the first scholar reads—that is *spells*—a word wrong, and the teacher alludes to the wrong and sets about correcting it, such of the rest of the class as have fallen into the same error will be tempted to change theirs clandestinely, to make it correspond to the true standard. If they would do it openly, the evil would be comparatively trifling; perhaps not an evil at all; but it is unfortunate that we should tempt them in this way to do wrong.

With a view therefore to the prevention of this evil, it may be well to adopt one of

the two following methods. Let the teacher correct the slate of each pupil, without any communication with the other pupils; or let the pupils themselves correct the list, with the aid of a printed or written list, or a dictionary. The last method would be the better of the two, if every pupil would be as faithful and conscientious as he ought to be; and if dictionaries were not almost as rare in our common school rooms, as pearls or diamonds.*

But whatever the method which is pursued may be, it is well to continue on the lesson till every one is thoroughly master of it. If there is any pupil who does not attend to it properly, or whose memory is defective, it may be well to put the particular words which he cannot remember—for they will usually be few in each lesson—on a piece of paper or card, and carry it in his pocket a few days, recurring to it, often, till he can remember its contents.

If, however, he is *really faulty*—I mean voluntarily negligent—it will do him good to write the words which he does not remember on the black board, in view of the whole school, and suffer them to remain

* Rev. T. H. Gallaudet, to whom the public are already deeply indebted for his efforts in behalf of the rising generation, has recently prepared a dictionary expressly for the use of common schools. I have not seen it; but presume at once on its usefulness.

there till he can retain them in his memory. If compelled to have his faults exposed in this way a few times, there is reason to hope he will soon take care to avoid such exposure as much as possible.

Third method. Another, and a most excellent method of teaching spelling on the slate and black board, is by applying or framing words into sentences. In fact, the true orthography of some words can hardly be taught, to practical purpose, in any other manner.

In pursuance of this method, the teacher first writes a series of short sentences on the black board, omitting one important word in each. The sentences may be either original or selected, according to his convenience. The following is an example of the manner in which the sentences might be arranged on the black board.

The glisten.

The moon is

Speak and plain.

Books be kept clean.

The is cold.

Always truth.

This list of words is long enough to illustrate the principle, and give a clear idea of the plan proposed ; although for the use of a class of pupils, it might, if necessary, be extended much farther. The sentences *should be* written with great care ; and ~~the~~

space left for a word be so conspicuous that no pupil could mistake its place. The black board being in full view, the pupils should proceed to copy the sentences, with as much exactness as possible.

In the foregoing lesson, *stars* is the word which might supply the vacancy in the first sentence. But it would be too much, perhaps, for the greater part of a class of pupils, to both find out the appropriate word and spell it; at least for a little time, at first; the teacher should, therefore, proceed to the work of dictating, in succession, the words, *stars, bright, loud, should, air, and speak*. Other words might indeed in some instances make good sense, as, instead of *air*, we might insert *weather*; and instead of *speak*, *tell*; but the teacher will select those which appear most natural.

The teacher should not fill the vacancies on the black board, too soon. But when the pupils have all filled out their blanks, on their slates, he may fill out his own, or make the corrections in any other manner, which he may deem preferable.

I have said that the orthography of some words can hardly be taught, to practical purpose, in any other manner, except in this very way of incorporating them into sentences. The principal class of words alluded to was those which are pronounced alike, but spelled differently. Of this kind are

son and *sun*; *coarse* and *course*; *ascent* and *assent*, &c. These words are of every day occurrence, both in conversation and writing; and therefore it is of very great importance that we spell them with accuracy. And yet perhaps there is no class of words in the English language, so often misspelled as this.

Although I doubt not I have made the general plan intelligible, yet it may not be amiss to present one more example, involving a few of the class of words now under consideration. Thus the teacher may write on the black board the following sentences :

The shines.

We on slates.

My , obey thy father.

What you?

The clear sky.

He fell down

Always do

 is the staff of life.

The of a shoe.

Which is the of the room?

The contain blood.

Bring some and place it on

the fire.

Now though these sentences should be carefully arranged, and the proper words dictated by the teacher, few pupils would probably be found able to spell them all right. And yet, I say once more, I know of no

other way in which their orthography can be correctly taught by the instructor or learned by the pupil. They may, indeed, be committed to memory, as they often are; still it will require long, very long practice before a pupil can, in every instance, make the proper application.

After some time has passed, and the teacher has dictated the proper words to be supplied in several successive lessons, the pupils may be permitted to supply them in their own way. But this part of the exercise belongs as much to defining and composition as to spelling; perhaps even more. Do not be hasty in introducing it; remembering still, the maxim, "one thing at a time."

Let it not be objected that such a method of learning to spell is slow. I know it is so. Still it seems to me one of the best in the world—perhaps the very best—for practical purposes. Though a pupil advances, on this road, very leisurely, what he learns will, no doubt, be better understood and longer retained, than if the process were more rapid. It has at least two excellencies; first, that it always appears to excite interest; and secondly, that it teaches children to think and to write down their thoughts, as well as to spell. The only serious drawback upon its excellency is the pains it will cost. In respect to the latter, however, he who does not know that nothing valuable is to be

gained in school without hard labor, has not yet learned one of the most important secrets of his profession. There must be hard digging in school, as some very quaintly *call* it; and a fact one of the great ends of all education is to teach the young to *dig*, both for knowledge and excellence.

Fourth method. This is most happily adapted to those who have already made considerable progress in the art of spelling, although it may be used to some extent, with all. Its only peculiarity is that of classifying the words to be spelled. It will be recollected that I have spoken of classification as not to be adhered to in setting out with the black board, but to come in somewhat later.

We have no First Book for children that classifies words as much as seems to me desirable; at least I have seen none. Mr. J. F. Bumstead, of Boston, has indeed prepared a series of two or three, which I believe have been adopted in the Boston Primary Schools, in which the words are to a considerable extent, classified; and I have heard of one more, published elsewhere, but have not seen it. Nor am I over anxious to see such books, at least for the present. I am more anxious to see teachers able to render themselves (with the aid of the slate and black board,) the best spelling book for ~~the pupil~~, which, for a time, he could pos-

sibly have. After we have learned the art of proceeding, for a time, with *the last mentioned spelling book*, we may perhaps be able to make a wise use of some other kind.

But what do you mean, I shall no doubt be asked, by classifying words for the young to spell? I will endeavor to explain. And first I will speak of what might be called a *natural* classification.

We should not only begin at home, with the *known*, in every thing, and proceed gradually into the world of the *unknown*, but in our journeyings abroad, we should have regard to method. Especially should it be so, in our journeying abroad into the world of words which are found in our school books and in other books, as well as in the wilderness of objects, whose names and qualities the young are always so anxious to learn.

After a few somewhat desultory lessons have been given on the black board, the teacher should proceed to arrange the words of his pupils' spelling lessons, according to order and method. It is true that in beginning with the words slate, hand, &c. as already mentioned we observe one species of order or method; but there is a plan to be described which is much more orderly and methodical, as well as more natural.

One of the first lessons which should

presented, under the new system of which I am speaking, should be the names of things in the school room. These should, at first and to some extent, be dictated, slowly, by the teacher; and at the same time slowly written on the black board and corrected in the usual manner.

From the objects immediately around the pupils and *known* to them, we may make the following selection. These are, for the most part, *implements of the school room*.

| | | | |
|--------|----------|--------|------------|
| slate | table | wall | hand |
| pencil | pen | window | head |
| stove | ink | glass | body |
| fire | inkstand | book | stove pipe |
| wood | desk | rule | ashes |

This lesson would include the name of a part only of the objects near the pupil; reserving for a second lesson a few others whose orthography is a little more difficult. Here are a few of this second class.

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------|
| board | knife | key | clock |
| black board | crayon | dictionary | ceiling |
| door | port | crayon tongs | shoe |
| floor | copy book | shovel | boot |
| thermometer | spelling book | cloak | hat |

One of the earlier lessons of words for spelling, however, may be the names of the various parts of the human frame. Mr. Bumsted, in his book entitled "My First School Book," makes a lesson of this sort *the very first*. Here follows a part of this

class or family ; such as seem to me most obviously proper, not indeed for a first lesson, but for a *third* or *fourth*.

| | | | |
|----------|-------|--------|-------|
| head | ear | temple | toe |
| neck | cheek | hair | foot |
| shoulder | teeth | back | ankle |
| elbow | mouth | breast | skin |
| arm | lip | side | hip |
| hand | chin | body | loins |
| thumb | face | leg | chest |
| finger | nose | heel | wrist |

A subsequent lesson might be formed from the more difficult of this family or class, as follows :

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|
| eye | tongue | knee-pan | heart |
| eye-brow | throat | tendon | artery |
| eye-lid | palate | nail | vein |
| eye-lash | wind pipe | blood | nerve |
| fore-head | stomach | flesh | marrow |
| skull | knee | bone | muscle |

Now, I do not mean to say, that it is best to give so long a lesson, at once, as either of the above, at least in all cases ; though neither of them is so far extended as to include the whole family to which it belongs. My object has been, chiefly, to show what I mean by classifying or grouping words together.

We may now proceed to other classes or families of words ; such, for example, as the names of the more common objects or implements of the kitchen, the garden, &c.

the farm. Perhaps the names of the *more* common flowers of the garden would *make* a list sufficiently long for one lesson ; reserving those of the fields, forests, and hedges, for a subsequent one.

Here are the names of some of the *more* common flowers of our gardens :

| | | |
|-------|---------------|--------------|
| rose | marigold | hollyhock |
| pink | lady shoe | sun flower |
| peony | lilach | heart's ease |
| tulip | violet | daffodil |
| poppy | morning glory | |

The names of field and forest flowers might naturally come in next. The following are some of them :

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|------------|----------------|
| dandelion | ivy | lily | may-weed |
| buttercup | laurel | daisy | johnswort |
| honey suckle | woodbine | clover | barberry |
| white wood | maple | strawberry | apple tree |
| magnolia | cowslip | thistle | peach tree, &c |

The names of fruits might properly enough come next. Here, also, I would make a division of the foreign and domestic. The following are some of the first :

| | | | |
|-----------|---------|--------------|------------|
| apple | plum | strawberry | mulberry |
| pear | quince | raspberry | blackberry |
| peach | grape | whortleberry | dew berry |
| apricot | currant | bilberry | muskmelon |
| nectarine | cherry | gooseberry | watermelon |

The names of foreign fruits, such as are use among us, might follow.

In this list, however, we might perhaps include nuts :

| | | | |
|-----------|---------|------------|------------|
| orange | raisin | almond | pine apple |
| lemon | prune | Brazil nut | peanut |
| citron | date | lime | cocoanut |
| fig | walnut | banana | |
| persimmon | chesnut | pine apple | |

The names of the birds most common in the vicinity of the school house, always makes an interesting lesson ; and if by birds is meant the feathered race in general, a division might be necessary, into domestic birds and fowls, and those which have not been domesticated—either of which would form quite a respectable list. After these might follow the names of quadrupeds, fishes, insects, &c. Indeed men themselves might be classed, in at least, one respect—that is according to their nation—as Englishmen, Italian, American, Chinese, Hindoo, &c.

One additional suggestion to the teacher will naturally come in here. It is that in forming these lessons he will always find it useful to the pupils—exceedingly so—to call on them for aid. Thus suppose he is writing down on the black board the names of our domestic fruits. He has written the words apple, pear, peach, and perhaps a few others ; and now, whether he can recollect any more or not, let him call upon the class to recollect for him. “ I have written such

and such words," he says, reading aloud what he has written ; "now who can think of another?" If he sees the hands of a number of individuals up, he selects from them whom he pleases ; and these give him the information required.

Suppose the lesson designed were a list of the names of persons—say of men only. Not indeed of *all* the men's names which could be thought of, for that would make a list altogether too long ; but, for the first, a list of the scripture names of this sort. Let the pupils here, too, be called upon to lend their aid. Such a course would interest their minds ; and as it is easy to see, might be quite useful.

So also in making out a list of quadrupeds, we might furnish our pupils with pleasant employment in recalling and giving us names. The meaning of the word quadruped, as distinguished from biped, might and should be given, as we pass along ; as well as the meaning of many other new and often perplexing terms.

But we should not only teach our pupils to spell, correctly, the names of *things*, but also of *qualities* or *properties*. I refer here to the various colors, tastes, odors, &c. of the objects around us ; as red, white, black, sour, sweet, bitter, heavy, light, ugly, beautiful, offensive, fragrant, &c.

Again, too, we may collect names of ac-

tions, as well as things and qualities. Some may be surprised at the phrase—*names of actions*. But what are verbs but names of actions ; as walk, write, break, speak, lift, ride, &c. ? But, on this part of my subject at least, a word to the wise will, most surely, be sufficient.

But once more ; the names of professions and occupations might form natural and interesting lessons for slate and black board spelling. The information, moreover, which would naturally come in, during the study of these lessons, is too important to be slighted. Take, for example, a list of human occupations, such as are most common among us ; and with which it is to be presumed every pupil will be more or less familiarly acquainted. Here is such a list.

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Farmer | tanner | turner | printer |
| gardener | tailor | butcher | engraver |
| joiner | physician | cooper | shoe-maker |
| carpenter | minister | blacksmith | weaver |
| miller | lawyer | hatter | spinner |
| baker | teacher | painter | housekeeper |

In order to fix the attention of the intelligent school master, for a moment, on the importance of this method of classifying words, let me present, in contrast with the above, the following lesson,—part of a lesson rather,—from one of our old fashioned spelling books.

| | | | |
|-------|--------|----------|-------|
| baker | dial | fever | giant |
| brier | diet | final | gravy |
| cider | duty | flagrant | gruel |
| crazy | dyer | focus | holy |
| crier | draper | fuel | human |
| cruel | fatal | glory | icy |

Let the teacher, I say, observe for himself and see if there is any natural bond of relationship between these words, or between any two of them, as they now stand. What connection is there, for example, between *baker* and *brier*? Or between *cider* and *crazy*? Or between *giant* and *gravy*?

It is not in *one* spelling book alone that this natural order of things has been overlooked; it is in all, or almost all. This increases the necessity—already sufficiently imperious—of something more rational; and especially of introducing to our schools slate and black board exercises.

It is not indeed to be denied—no one attempts to deny it; it is cheerfully conceded—that the slate and black board instruction which is here recommended, would cost a teacher a good deal of labor; but what then? Have we not found that every thing valuable on earth costs us labor? But is not the kind of instruction to which I refer exceedingly desirable?

Had we a manual—a printed one I mean—from which the teacher might make his at least a part of them, without

being compelled to go through a dictionary and make the assortment for himself, it would greatly diminish, in no small degree, his labors. Such a manual would certainly be useful, although by no means indispensable ; it would be useful I mean to teachers.

A difficulty may arise here, in the mind of the reader. Had we such a manual, he will say, the pupils could obtain it, as well as the teacher ; and whenever their lesson was taken from it they might be disposed to avail themselves, privately, of its use.

But it should be remembered that even to do this would be better than downright idleness, or roguery. Besides, no teacher would be obliged to take any whole list or table from it. He might make his selections, even from that. He would, at least, add greatly to the labor of any pupil who without attempting to think, should simply square his slate by the manual. Or at any rate the teacher could take away the manuals, or forbid their use, just as he is accustomed to use his power in other cases. No pupil thinks of looking into his book to see how the word is spelled which the master pronounces, even though he has it in his hand, or under his arm. Or if any pupil were inclined to do this, no good teacher would allow it.

A stronger objection to slate and black board spelling, in the manner I have recom-

mended, may be brought by some ; and will appear, at first view, to have weight. Only two or three, it will be said, of the great grammatical classes of words—the noun, the verb, and perhaps the adjective—can be spelled in this way ; and those only in their simple or primitive form. What is to be done with the pronouns, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections ; to say nothing of a great many verbs, adjectives, and nouns, which cannot easily be thus associated or classified ? And what is to become of a host of derivative and compound words ?

As to compound words, there is usually, little difficulty, if a child can but spell the simple words of which they are made up. And in regard to derivatives, those should undoubtedly be taught by classes or families. I had reserved the teaching of primitives and derivatives for a *fifth method* of teaching spelling on the black board. It is however, in reality, little more than a modification of the fourth, of which I am now treating. Let us then consider it a few moments.

The teacher gives out, for example, on the black board, the two words *able* and *press*, and requires his pupils to collect, on their slates, as many of their derivatives as they can. ^{Each} Then writes down on his slate, he can recollect, either

with or without a dictionary, according to the direction of the teacher. When they have done, the teacher adds, in some way, those which they have omitted.

Here follow the derivatives of the word able ; or at least the principal of them.

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| able | enable | disability | payable |
| ably | enabling | probably | rateable |
| abler | enabled | probability | tameable |
| ableness | disable | commendable | saleable |
| ability | disabling | curable | taxable |
| unable | disabled | notable | perishable |

A much longer list will be made—and a much more important one—from the primitive word press. The following will, I believe, include nearly all.

| | | |
|------------|----------------|-------------------|
| press | express | compress |
| pressing | expression | compression |
| pressed | expressive | compressing |
| presser | expressively | compressed |
| pressingly | expressiveness | compressive |
| pression | expressed | compressure |
| pressure | expressly | compressible |
| depress | expressible | compressibility |
| depressing | expressness | compressibleness |
| depression | impression | incompressible |
| depressive | impressing | incompressibility |
| depressor | impressive | inexpressible |
| depressed | impressively | inexpressibly |
| repress | impressible | inexpressive |
| repressing | impressiveness | impressed |
| repressed | impressibility | |

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| repression | impressment |
| repressive | impressure |

In regard to the other classes of words alluded to, why should not the teacher give out to his pupils, the prepositions, the conjunctions, the interjections, the pronouns, and even the adverbs as so many separate lessons? They are by no means numerous. Some of them, as the conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections, are not too long for a single lesson ; while others, as the adverb, and pronoun might be divided.* It might be remarked, however, that if these last were never taught to the pupils of our common schools, they would be about as well off as they now are. In what spelling book do we find any thing like a complete list of all these words? And where is the teacher whose ingenuity ever supplies them? I could mention several of each of these classes, and many of the adverbs, that I never saw in the columns of a spelling book, in my life. Yet they are, almost without exception, highly important words, and of frequent occurrence and use.

With respect to verbs and adjectives, there is more difficulty ; though, as I trust, I have shown very conclusively elsewhere,

* I have not mentioned the articles, *a*, *an* and *the* ; because their number is so small and their structure so simple, as to render them of no considerable importance in a mere spelling lesson.

the orthography of a considerable number of the more common of both of them may be taught on the black board with nearly the same ease as the common and proper substantives.* With a little ingenuity, a teacher may group together, in natural families or classes many more of them, most certainly, than he would, at first, believe to be possible.

* See the Chapter on teaching Grammar on the slate and black board.

g*

CHAPTER VII.

DEFINING.

There are numerous ways of teaching the definition of words by means of slates and black boards. Some of these have been involved, of necessity, in the foregoing chapter ; and were it not for pursuing, as much as possible, only one thing at a time, I should be inclined to recommend teaching spelling and defining simultaneously. Indeed in some cases and with very large classes of pupils, I have no doubt it may be well to do so ; but, as a general rule, it appears to me desirable to keep them separate ; at least for a time. The methods of defining which are here recommended, will, however, in some respects, be a *review* of the spelling lesson, just as that was a review of the writing lessons.

The first method of defining which will be mentioned, consists in giving the pupils, on the black board, a list of skeleton sentences, which, after copying or transferring to their slates, they are required to fill up. These should, at first, be very simple and *easy*, like the following.

It is now o'clock.*
 Our slates are made to on.
 Our pencils are to with.
 The sun gives and heat.
 Water, when makes ice.
 Boys wear on their heads.
 Girls wear
 The eye is to with.
 The teeth are to with.
 The are for hearing.
 The nose is to with.
 The legs are to with.
 The color of coal is
 Snow is
 Shoes are to wear on our
 When people are they call a phy-
 sician.
 Horses and oxen are used to wagons
 and carts.
 Birds in the air.
 Carpenters houses.
 Bricks are made of

This should not be regarded as precisely
 the same sort of lesson with one which is
 found in the chapter on spelling. There
 the teacher dictates words to fill the
 vacant spaces ; here the pupils are expected
 and required to invent them for themselves.
 That was, indeed, an introduction to this,

* The insertion of *this*, in an *easy* lesson, especially a
first lesson, presupposes what ought always to exist, viz.
 a clock, or time piece, in the school room.

but was by no means, the same thing. In truth most of the preceding chapters are introductory to the present, just as the present is to those which follow it.

This method of teaching pupils to define words, without the aid, to the teacher, of a manual, will, I say once more, cost him much patient and persevering effort. And even with the aid of a manual, a good deal of judgment will be required in selecting the appropriate sentences and adapting them to the mental capacity and progress of the pupils. For customs vary so much in different places that even the foregoing simple lesson, if found in a printed manual, would require, here and there, slight modifications. In some parts of our country, for example, oxen are seldom, if ever used for draught, but only horses; or at most horses and mules. In others, the same person is both joiner and carpenter; but is, in general, called a joiner. And so of many other things or customs alluded to, or involved in the selections.

And as for escaping from hard labor, no teacher should expect it. In the present state of society, especially of schools, with every thing to do, and few tools or instruments to work with, and little sympathy from those around him, a teacher should, on entering a school, make up his mind "*to spend and be spent*" in an employment

where he will receive very little either of sympathy or co-operation. Let him not *expect* even the friendship, or the gratitude, of those for whom he labors. But to resume the subject.

After the pupils have been sufficiently drilled with lessons which require but little thought, inquiry or study, let them have such as are a little more difficult, yet by no means beyond their comprehension; of which the following may serve as an example.

Gold is of a color.

The sea has a appearance.

There are primary colors.

 is the staff of life.

Always the truth.

Think before you speak once.

Quadrupeds are those animals which have legs.

Bipeds have only legs.

He that would die well, must first well.

Animals that can live both in water and on land are usually called

Honor and respect

Cain his brother.

Elijah was to heaven in a fiery chariot.

Methuselah was the man that ever lived.

Do you your teacher?

Do you like to _____ on the slate?

It is very _____ weather.

Am I my _____ keeper?

If the blind lead the _____ both shall fall into the ditch.

Let this first method of defining be pursued long enough to lead the pupils to think for themselves. Deprive them, for the time, of all dictionaries, and if it were possible, of all means of communication with each other. I have elsewhere insisted, at sufficient length and with sufficient earnestness, on the importance of separate desks for each pupil, at a considerable distance from each other. Yet in spite of this necessary provision, some will still need much watching, or they will avail themselves of the aid of their neighbors. Yet there is hardly any thing of more importance than to endeavor, at every possible step, to throw them on their own resources.

When all have filled their blanks, and had sufficient time for reflection, the teacher should either examine their slates, separately, or require an assistant to do it. If all are correct, why very well; if not, let him fill out the blanks on the black board, and require them to make the necessary corrections.

It may not be advisable always to require of every pupil that the word he inserts *should correspond precisely with our own*

intention. Thus in the phrase respecting carpenters, it is enough if the pupil inserts the work *make* or *erect*, although build may have been the word in our own mind. What is not absolutely incorrect, or wrong, in such a case, should be considered as correct; at least sufficiently so for the teacher's purpose.

The second method of defining, which, in the natural order of things ought to be pursued, is that of incorporating or framing words into sentences. Thus the teacher may give out a list of words like the following.

| | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|
| pen | book | moon | carpenter | hat |
| ink | fire | stars | boy | cap |
| pencil | sun | sky | brick | dog |
| floor | | steam | rock | cat |
| paper | gold | smoke | eye | hen |
| slate | silver | stove | ear | duck |
| hand | water | horses | finger | fish |
| head | ice | bird | shoes | oyster |

This list is, of course, vastly too long for the first lesson of the kind; but is given at such a length, that the teacher may have a clear view, in little space, of the plan which is proposed.

The repetition of words which may be found in the lessons on the preceding pages, is not a matter of accident, but was intended. It will be soon enough to give out a set of words with which they are less ac-

quainted when they have become masters as it were, of those to which they have already been introduced. Let the teacher make all possible *reasonable* haste ; but let him remember, well, to "Make haste slowly."

This method of incorporating words into sentences is very simple, and when once understood, easily adopted by the most ignorant or indifferent pupil ; while it also gives scope to the more active minds and powers of the more intelligent and ingenious. It consists in merely taking the words of the lesson, one by one, and so prefixing or annexing other words to them, that the whole will make sense. Thus suppose the pupil has placed, near the top of his slate, the word *pen*, as below.

pen

Now by prefixing to it the word *my*, and annexing the two words *needs*, and *mending*, the sentence will of course read thus

My pen needs mending.

In this way *pen* becomes incorporated, as it is called, into a sentence. And so of any other word of the above lesson, and of the words of any other lesson which may be presented.

Now is it not obvious, at a glance, that *no pupil*, unaided, can thus *fix*, *frame* or *in-*

corporate words into sentences without becoming master of their meaning? How can he? He may fail of success, in his efforts, it is true; but if he succeeds in performing the work assigned him, he certainly understands at least *one* common meaning of the words he uses.

In pursuing this course of instruction, I have sometimes found pupils, who, not satisfied with merely incorporating the given word, *once*, would relate quite a long story on the slate, and perhaps introduce it several times. All this repetition and effort is useful. Such voluntary efforts are a thousand times better for them than if the same thing were extorted from them in the form of task work.

This part of my subject might be extended, almost indefinitely, by examples of lessons, like the foregoing; but if I have succeeded in making the principle understood by the reader, is not one example as good as a hundred?

We come now to a third method of teaching—if, indeed, it should not be regarded as a mere extension of the preceding. It is to introduce into defining the classification which was mentioned under the fourth method of teaching spelling. Thus in giving out lessons on the black board, to be incorporated into sentences, (after a little progress had been made in the second

method above,) we should take pains to arrange the words in natural classes or families. A lesson like the following would be useful, including the names of some of the more common birds.

| | | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| sparrow | jay | lark | humming bird |
| robin | blue bird | thrush | linnet |
| wren | black bird | snipe | tomtit |
| swallow | crow | heron | mourning dove |
| martin | hawk | partridge | whippoorwill |
| quail | pigeon | woodcock | canary bird |
| owl | | | |

Here a little more thinking will be required than in connection with some of the preceding lessons, while it will be equally interesting, and still more instructive. The same will be true of many other classes of words, even though they were *small* classes. The implements or instruments used in performing our various occupations would be useful. Take the occupation of printer; of which perhaps the teacher knows very little. He knows, at least, that in order to print a book on paper, there must be

| | | |
|----------|-------------|-------------------|
| building | type | press |
| room | composition | pressman |
| forms | paper | proof |
| boxes | ink | proof reader, &c. |

As most children are unacquainted with *the art of printing*, few might be able to in-

corporate a very long list of words which relate to this occupation into sentences; I have therefore made it extremely short.

Of the names of the implements of husbandry, most children could make a good use of a long list. Thus suppose the lesson were the following.

| | | | |
|---------|--------|-----------|-------------|
| plough | harrow | shovel | axe |
| oxen | roller | rake | sickle |
| horse | hoe | scythe | grindstone |
| yoke | spade | pitchfork | saw |
| harness | chain | cart | hay knife |
| fan | riddle | flail | basket, &c. |

These, with a little instruction, most pupils would readily dispose of. Nearly as well would they manage the names of the tools of the carpenter, as

| | | | |
|------------|----------|----------|--------|
| bench | axe | chisel | square |
| vise | broadaxe | mallet | hammer |
| plumb line | saw | dividers | gimlet |

Need I say that besides cultivating the thinking powers, and especially the faculty of association, we are all this while greatly enlarging the child's vocabulary, and making him acquainted with the things and objects around him?

Suppose a pupil, in copying the word *dividers*, should say; "Sir, I do not know what a carpenter's dividers are." You will of course inform him. In doing so, let your language and explanations be plain and

simple. The rest will listen. Are you not, by the information you give him, enlarging his mind? This you will be better able to determine, when you come to examine his list of words. You will find there, if nothing more, at least the echo of your own instructions. No great matter, however, if it is so ; your words have become knowledge to him. The evidence of this will appear in the correct construction of the sentence ; and the earnest desire, on his part, that if not correct you will make it so.

A fourth exercise in defining, and the concluding one which will be mentioned—one which naturally brings the pupil upon the very confines of composition—is that of making out lists of regular definitions, something like the definitions of a dictionary, and arranged in a similar manner, and either giving them to the teacher for correction or correcting them from a dictionary. Thus suppose the lesson to consist of the names of the more common human occupations, they are required to define them in the simplest manner which may be in their power. Let the lesson, for this purpose, be the following.

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------|----------|---------------|
| hatter | minister | miller | cabinet-maker |
| tanner | merchant | druggist | carver |
| printer | physician | carrier | gilder |
| <i>spinner</i> | attorney | clothier | house-keeper |
| <i>potter</i> | architect | paver | clock-maker |

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| farmer | joiner | dyer | watch-maker |
| gardener | carpenter | collier | shoe-maker. |

Care should always be taken, by the teacher, to have the words so written, on their slates, as may be most convenient to them with respect to the additions they are to make, in the form of definitions. The words of the lesson above should be written pretty near the left hand side of the slate.

Now with this lesson before him, or a part of it, or of one like it, the pupil is first to define the word *hatter*. Well, he says to himself, a hatter is a person who makes hats. So he annexes to the word *hatter*, *one who makes hats*. Then he proceeds to the second word. Here he is at a loss, perhaps, for a definition, i. e. at a loss which to choose between two—whether to say “tanner, one who makes leather,” or “tanner, one who tans skins.” Here is room for much thought, and perhaps, in the end, for remarks from the teacher, as instructive as they will be welcome. So of the next words, printer, spinner, &c.

From words of this description the transition would not be great to words of various sorts, more difficult of definition. Sometimes a verse or paragraph from a reading book might be used for this purpose, and sometimes an anecdote. The anecdote or verse might be written on the black board; or the pupils might copy and add definitions

to such words only as they could ; omitting the rest.

In short, to repeat what has been already repeated, nothing would be more foreign from the intention of these exercises, than an exact or servile imitation of them, in all circumstances. I have spoken of various methods of teaching from the slate and black board. I have expressed, freely and in sincerity, the conclusions to which experience, observation and reflection have led me. Yet it is by no means improbable that many a teacher might be greatly benefited by what I have said and shall hereafter say, who would *not* adopt one in ten of the particular methods or exercises, which are presented. He would be led rather, (and this is what is most desirable,) to originate plans and methods for himself. Every teacher of spirit, in pursuing another's methods, will be apt to feel like David in Saul's armor ; awkward and embarrassed. Let a teacher gird himself in his own armor, and act for himself according to the circumstances in which he is placed, and the means and materials which he has in his power. Others may afford hints ; but others cannot think for him—cannot even, with advantage, *originate* for him. at least to any great extent.

CHAPTER VIII.

COMPOSITION.

Few things in the whole compass of an English education are more dreaded by students, especially of our common schools, than composition ; and perhaps there are few things, which, after all, are so imperfectly understood. Now what can there be in the *nature* of composition itself which renders it so irksome to the student, and is the cause of its being so often but imperfectly understood ?

They who have used the slate and black board in their schools, according to the spirit of the preceding chapter, will not long hesitate for a reply to this question. They know that there is no inherent difficulty about the matter, at all ; but that children who have ideas, can be taught to put them down with pen or pencil or both ; and that to do this is *to compose*.

We have seen that the several successive processes of study on the slate and black board involve, continually, those which precede them ; and have all the merit of reviews. Thus while teaching spelling, the pupil is, as it were, constantly reviewing his

writing, and becoming more and more perfect in that branch. In defining he is not only reviewing his writing, but his spelling likewise.

And now, in teaching composition, in the way proposed, the pupil will not only be attaining, ere he is aware, the art of expressing his thoughts, but he will also at the same time be perfecting himself in the branches which have already been attended to, viz. writing, spelling, and defining.— Does any one suspect this to be, in any respect, an exaggerated statement? Let him attend, then, to the facts, methods, and illustrations which follow; and I trust he will soon be freed from his suspicions.

Nor let him be startled when I assure him that if a teacher has followed the spirit of the plans and methods thus far presented, not merely in a single lesson or two of each sort, but to an extent which has rendered his pupils tolerably perfect in each, they are already pretty far advanced in the art of composition. They may not have heard the *word, composition* from the mouth of the teacher; but they are nevertheless *able to compose*.

The exercises in defining, which have been recommended, are especially of this sort. Every lesson which requires the incorporation of words into sentences, is a *lesson in composition*; and a most excellent

lesson, too. There are no special lessons in composition, other than these, absolutely necessary. Observe, however, that I say *absolutely* necessary. There are others which are highly useful, no doubt.

But, I repeat it, that if no special lessons in composition were ever given to a child, no one who should follow out the course of slate and black board exercises which are indicated in the foregoing chapters could fail, in the end, to be able to express his thoughts, on every subject, with his pen or pencil—yes, and with his tongue, too—far better than without them. For it is not only true, as has been well said by Blair, that “they who are learning to compose and arrange their sentences with accuracy and order are learning at the same time to think with accuracy and order;” but also that both thinking and composing with accuracy and order tend, in their results, to teach the pupils to *speak* with accuracy and order.

Framing words into sentences then, is the best elementary exercise in composition. But as the pupil becomes more and more familiar with the progress of incorporating them so as to make sense, the teacher can introduce, gradually, several other things necessary to produce the best style of English composition. He can teach him how to express himself *properly, clearly, precisely, forcibly, elegantly, &c.*

After the process of framing words into sentences—one word into each—has become common, the teacher should, occasionally throw together, on the black board, a greater variety of words than has yet been suggested, and require the scholars to make their selection, and incorporate into sentences such as they please. Perhaps he will find it convenient to assign to each of them a given number, say twelve or twenty. Or, in other instances, one scholar may select more, and another fewer of the words; according to capacity; one twelve, another eight, another fifteen, another twenty, &c.

The reasons for this necessity are that so great is the difference in children's minds that where a lesson of a certain number of words is given out to all, some will find it difficult, without hurrying, to get through as soon as others, or as soon as the time required, and their thoughts will not have free scope; whereas if while the rapid pupil is required to incorporate twenty words into sentences, the one of slower mould has only twelve or ten or eight assigned him, he will be likely to do better justice to his own powers of thinking than he otherwise would.

Indeed, more than even this is true. When a large lesson of words—say forty or fifty—is placed on the black board to give scope to the differing *tastes* of different pupils, each will select a certain set of

them, another, perhaps, quite a different set. And we all know how much more cheerfully and successfully the mind will work when it is pleased, than when it is otherwise.

Let the following be regarded as a mere specimen of the exercise to which I now refer.

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------|--------|
| steam-boat | apple | brown | door |
| high-way | farm-house | red | book |
| store-keeper | thrush | swallow | robin |
| school room | field | ocean | pencil |
| school master | walk | tree | bench |
| fire-place | peach | bluebird | island |

It is not without design that a number of compound words—a greater proportion than I have used in any former example—have been inserted in this list. Children are interested in their use, and should be introduced to them somewhere; and they are more or less used in every species of good composition.

As one method of teaching not only spelling and defining, but also composition, a teacher may give out a story or a description of something; from which his pupils may be required to exercise both their memories and their judgments in relating and writing down as many of the words and sentences as they can. If a teacher fears he has not the necessary “knack” or “tact” for telling stories, he may read a story from a book or newspaper; or what perhaps is

in some cases, better still, from the Bible. I might give a hundred examples of this sort; but one or two will be sufficient.

The teacher may, for example, give out, briefly, the story of Paul's shipwreck, on the island of Malta; or as it was then called Melita. He may mention the former and present condition of the island; how Paul came to be near there; where he was going; whom he had with him for company; how many persons, &c.; and having told his story, leave it to his pupils to recollect, gather up, and put down such words and sentences as they can. Some will recollect but very few, such as "A viper fastened on Paul's hand;" or "Paul was going to Rome when he was shipwrecked." Others may, perhaps, remember the whole story.

Or he may describe to them the view from the top of Boston State House—the city with its tall spires; the harbor, with its vessels; the adjoining towns and villages; Bunker Hill and its monument; the islands and shores in and around the harbor, &c. &c.

In either case, some pupils will remember, but few words, while others will remember many. In the last instance some one, perhaps, recollecting at the word Bunker Hill, an anecdote he had heard from his father, or some other aged friend, about *the battle* there, forgets the rest of the words.

in the description ; or at least many of them. Others will remember and set down in their list

| | | | |
|----------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| city | island | Brighton | monument |
| spires | shore | Cambridge | Bunker Hill |
| houses | coast | Malden | Charlestown |
| churches | Roxbury | Warren | State Prison |
| harbor | Dorchester | war | Navy Yard |
| vessel | Chelsea | British | steamboat |

The mere recollection and putting down of these words, I know, would be more a spelling and thinking lesson than any thing else. But let the pupils also prefix or add something to each word. Let them, in fact, after making out their list, interweave their words into sentences, in all possible forms. No matter whether they relate anecdotes, or record passages of history which are lodged in their memories, or merely write simple sentences, descriptive or grave. All will be serviceable ; all will contribute to aid them in the expression of their thoughts ; all will swell the size of their vocabularies, and develope and enlarge their minds.

Another method—if indeed it can be called *another*—is suggested by Mr. Bumsted, in his “ Spelling and Thinking combined,”* and it is called by him “ Sentence

* This might, with great propriety, have come in elsewhere, under the general head Defining. However, it is not only an excellent lesson in defining, but so valuable also as a stepping stone in the art of composing, that I have determined on the whole to insert it in this place.

making, or Culture of Thought." He says what has been already in substance repeated in this work, that "children like to fit tangible things one to another; and it pleases them to find that they fit well. So in regard to words; with a little skill on the part of the teacher, this will be found easy and pleasant, even to very young scholars."

As an assistant to Sentence making, as he calls it, he has prepared a table in the beginning of his work. This table consists of a set of parts of sentences, such as "I am," "I was," "He is a" — "The — child," &c.; so arranged that the youngest pupil may see that some one or more words is wanting to make sense. There is one set of these parts of sentences for every page or nearly every page of the book; and it is made the duty of the pupil to select words from these pages, and fit them into the parts of sentences.

Perhaps I cannot present a better exercise for slate and black board composition, than one of these pages of words, with the corresponding parts of sentences, and Mr. B.'s own explanations.

The following is page 9th.

| | | |
|------|---------|----------|
| eye | stare | talked |
| eyes | starer | speak |
| see | stares | speaker |
| | staring | speaks |
| | stared | speaking |

| | | |
|---------|---------|------------|
| saw | peep | spoken |
| sight | peeper | tell |
| sights | peeping | teller |
| look | peeped | tells |
| looker | mouth | telling |
| looks | mouths | told |
| looking | tongue | say |
| looked | voice | saying |
| gaze | talk | said |
| gazer | talker | saith |
| gazing | talks | whisper |
| gazed | talking | whispering |
| | | whispered |

Now the part of his sentence table which applies to this, is as follows :

The _____
 I can _____
 I am _____
 I have _____
 He is a _____

His directions to teachers and others, in explanation of this plan for sentence making or composing are these.

“Taking the ninth page, the teacher says, “Let us see what word on this will do to have *The* put before it.” It may not be difficult for the scholars to judge and see where they can do it, and to read thus—*The eye, The sight, The mouth, The tongue, &c.* What words will do to have *I can* put before them? They may discover that it will fit many, thus: *I can see, I can look, I can peep, &c.*

“The foregoing may be extended, thus :
The eye of John. The eye of a needle. The eyes of our old grey cat. The eyes of sister Jane are very sore. Open the mouth wide. The mouth of the pitcher is broken. I could not speak without my tongue. We had a tongue for dinner. I can peep through that hole.

Again, on another page, he has among others, the words singing, whistling, crying, sobbing, shrieking, bawling, &c. ; while for one of the sentences, into which these words are to be incorporated he has The — child. By inserting the words above in the blanks of this sentence we have, of course, *The sobbing child, The singing child, The crying child, The bawling child, &c.*

. Now the book to which I refer is an exceedingly interesting little book ; and if a spelling book of any sort were to be selected for a child of mine, I know not at present of a better than this, in the English language. But every school which has an abundance of slates and black boards, and an ingenious teacher who *loves the school*, can have the same sort of exercises, every day, without any printed books. The teacher, in such circumstances, can invent his own lesson.

This exercise, however, as a stepping stone to composition—if indeed it ought not to be called an exercise in composition itself, which is the undoubted fact—has one

advantage over any thing which I have yet mentioned, viz : that having a list of words written down on the black board, a small set of defective or blank sentences will be sufficient for the work of *incorporation* for a long time. Thus, suppose the teacher should write on the black board the following list of the names of trees.

| | | | |
|---------|------------|---------|------------|
| hickory | cherry | beach | locust |
| oak | mahogany | cypress | magnolia |
| maple | white-wood | poplar | dog-wood |
| chesnut | pine | birch | apple-tree |
| elm | hemlock | alder | sumach |
| ash | sassafras | boxwood | buttonwood |
| bass | ebony | fir | logwood |

And then suppose, also, that he should prepare the following blank or partial sentences, and ask his pupils to frame as many of the words of the lesson, as they possibly could, into those sentences.

The _____ is beautiful.

The _____ is very useful.

Boards are made from the _____.

Shingles are made from _____.

We make rails, for fences of the _____ tree.

The _____ tree has fruit on it.

Would not such a table and set of sentences afford much pleasant and valuable employment to pupils of every age ? What though they did not know the uses of many kinds of these trees ? Would it not lead them to inquire ?

But the teacher might take words which are still more common, such as the following.

| | | | | |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| hat | sing | bread | dog | think |
| basket | house | apples | horse | read |
| talk | bird | city | run | hope |
| write | leaf | coat | speak | fear |

Then for a part of a sentence he might take the following.

I do not ———

I can not ———

He can ———

The ——— is large.

I can ——— fast.

It is good ———

How much interesting and intelligible employment such a small lesson would furnish! And how useful it would be not only as an exercise in composition, but in defining also, and spelling. Perhaps it would not be necessary for the pupils always to copy the long lessons of words in these cases; but rather make a common use of the black board, and reserve the space on their slates for their blank sentences, and for other operations.

I have spoken of what is, and what is not absolutely necessary in teaching, in our schools, the art of composing well. But whatever may or may not be indispensably necessary, there are two special exercises which are, to say the least, very convenient,

and useful; for which the slate and pencil are as well adapted as pencil and paper are. I refer to keeping a *journal, and letter writing*.

These two special exercises are so valuable that, perhaps, I use too cold a word when I say they are very convenient. In fact I must consider them, in the education of my own children, quite indispensable.

Keeping a journal is, I think, the first in order. In this journal—prepared of course, at first, on the slate—the child should be encouraged to write down his own thoughts, and to some extent his feelings; not merely a single set of occasional ones, but as they recur from hour to hour. They need not, at first—indeed they should not—be exhibited to any individual but the teacher.

I am quite at loss why this practice is so little in vogue in our best schools. In a few, I know, it is common, and in its results very happy; but in general it is as much overlooked, as if the thing were wholly impracticable. Nothing, as it seems to me, would, at a suitable age, and proper degree of progress, under suitable circumstances, and under the direction of a judicious teacher, be more interesting to the pupils; and few things would be more useful. It could never come to be considered in the light of mere drudgery—like writing on grave subjects, such as *Politeness, Self-government, Good manners, &c.*

Two or three things should be required in teaching composition, to which no attention need be paid in the mere incorporation of words into sentences. For I deem it desirable to render those exercises as simple as they can possibly be made.

The first thing to which I refer is a correct use of capital letters. The right use of these can hardly be learned by rules ; it is best acquired by long practice. Perhaps it will be well for the teacher to give examples of their *mis*-application, as a means of exciting interest and rendering their right use more obvious, and the whole subject more intelligible.

The second thing referred to is the right disposition of words in the *line*. Some crowd their words too much ; others leave too much space between them. Some leave no marginal space on the slate or paper ; others leave too much ; and others again have their space very irregular. A due attention to these small matters adds greatly to the beauty of both slate writing and writing on paper.

Another thing there is, which deserves more attention than all else which I have named in these paragraphs ; it is the punctuation. We should not be tedious with the young ; and yet a correct punctuation of what they write is highly desirable, and *may be gradually obtained*. It is especially

desirable in letter writing. My own rule is, to punctuate in such a manner as to make what I write, mean what I intend to have it mean ; and I know not whether I am governed by any other rule. But children cannot be governed, even by this rule ; much less by rules which are still more arbitrary. I would, therefore, endeavor to secure the point by long practice ; in doing which the black board and the slate will subserve a valuable purpose. The mechanical use of these marks, so far as they may be justly said to have a mechanical use is also sooner and more easily acquired on the black board, than in any other manner.

CHAPTER IX.

READING.

No complaint in relation to common schools is more general than the want of suitable reading books. Children, it is said, do not understand what they read; and when they do partly understand it, their knowledge is so imperfect, that they cannot read in a natural and proper manner.

There is much reason for this complaint. The great, or at least the fundamental rule, in regard to reading is; "Read as you talk." But it is impossible to comply with such a rule as this, in regard to one in twenty of the lessons in reading which we present to our children. They should be able not only to read and understand, at a glance, the words they are about to utter, but also to see forward several words beyond those which they are reading, and perceive the connection or relation, and the meaning of both.

I am aware that there is a great difference in school books. Some few which have been prepared of late years, are certainly

preferable to Scott's Lessons, the English Reader, and the American Orator. And yet not one that I have seen is so well adapted to the wants of beginners, as could be wished ; nor do I know that a First book can be prepared which would be, in every respect, what we need, unless those who are to use it, have first been disciplined, pretty well, on the slate and black board.

But what is the kind of slate and black board discipline in reading which is requisite, as a preliminary to the use of reading books ? This it will be my object in the present chapter, to point out.

It has been seen that both in Spelling and Composition, the pupil will be led to the formation of sentences, and sometimes long ones. Indeed, it has been already observed that some of the more ingenious, or more advanced, in elder classes, will not only form simple sentences, but even write out anecdotes, of considerable length. I have known a boy ten years of age to write out on his slate an anecdote, equal in length to nearly a whole page of an ordinary reading book.

The slate and black board method of teaching reading, then, has this peculiarity and excellence, that each pupil, at his first attempts, reads only his own thoughts, as he has put them together in the construction of his sentences. In this way he must of

doubt that he would read it intelligibly ? How could he do otherwise ? Let it be, if you please, the second of them. In ordinary common school reading, such a sentence, from beginning to end, or at least till we come to the last syllable, would be read in a straight line, as it were, without rising or falling inflection, and without emphasis ; in other words, it would be read in a cold, unintelligible, monotonous manner.

But would it be read thus by the pupil who had formed it for himself ? Would he stand at sixes and sevens, while reading it ? Would he be found now resting on this leg ; now on that ; now inclining his head this way, perhaps casting a sideways glance at something or somebody in another part of the room—and now resting it on the opposite shoulder ? Would not the eye be at least partially lighted up, while he should give us the reason—important to him, however common place to us—why churches should be larger than dwelling houses ? Would every word and every syllable be pronounced in the same tone or pitch of voice till he come to the last, from which he would suddenly fall, as if into a ditch or slough ? Would not *church* and *dwelling house*, and above all *people*, be pronounced with more force, or in other words with more emphasis than the smaller and less *important* words between them ? It is im-

possible it should not be so ; and hence we see, at once, the superiority of this kind of reading lessons.

The superiority of this method of teaching reading, however, in one or two respects, is not wholly seen at the first glance. It demands a few moments of reflection.

While children, at school, are learning to read in the ordinary manner, there is so little which they can understand, or rather which they *do* understand, that they form the habit of reading every thing in the same monotonous manner, whether it is in their power to understand it or not ; and this habit often adheres to them through life. There are multitudes, among us, who often read whole pages—I had almost said whole volumes—without attaching any ideas to them, except that the monotony of feeling and thought is broken in upon, here and there, by something particularly exciting. The scriptures often speak of having eyes and seeing not, ears and hearing not, &c. ; and it is really true of many persons who were taught in our common schools, that they go through life, so far as their mere reading is concerned, very much in this condition. They read over page after page, in the most unintelligible—and if they read aloud, in the most monotonous—manner, and scarcely know that they have been

reading. Or if the mind is not wholly absent, it is so loosely attracted to the subject before it, that the slightest cause is sufficient to turn it aside, or divert it from its mill-horse track.

On this subject, as well as many others, I can speak with feeling, for I speak from sad experience. Hardly a day of my life passes, even at this advanced period of it, in which I do not detect myself in this very condition, that of having eyes and seeing not, and having ears and hearing not. I am most mortified, however, in reading the Scriptures; for partly as the result of this self same cause, and partly on account of the neglect of my teachers to explain what ought, in reading such a book, to have either been explained to me or omitted, I am more in the habit of reading the Bible in a monotonous manner than any other book.

Nor is it to reading, merely, that the monotony extends. We are the more likely—from this habit of monotony—to do other things in the same monotonous manner. Our habits are like ourselves, of a *herding* character. Monotony and stupidity in doing one thing, are apt to be followed by monotony and indifference in other things. So that the wretched manner of reading which so
 ively prevails in our schools, is after
 ery trifling matter.

return to our illustrations. Not

only should the pupils, after forming their sentences, be required to write them on the black board and read them in the hearing of their companions, but they should be criticised by them. By this I mean that each pupil of the class or school should be permitted to correct any defects in his reading which he might observe.

This is not said in ignorance of the fact that there are pupils in every school who are liable to abuse this privilege and become hypocritical, or fond of criticising for the sake of criticising. But the teacher would of course have the staff of power in his own hands, and could call on whom he pleased to make the corrections or criticisms. He would be likely, in general, to call on those who would make the best use of the permission.

To introduce this last exercise, I have been accustomed to read wrong, by design; and ask my pupils to correct me. As a mere introduction to the exercise, I still think this may be well; but in many cases, there will be errors enough which are real, without resorting to artificial ones.

The corrections may have reference to every thing which pertains to good reading. The pupils should be taught to observe, in the first place, whether he who reads his sentence reads loud enough. Sometimes his voice will be too high, sometimes in a

low a key. In general, except in cases and circumstances so rare as to form mere exceptions to a general rule, the voice in reading should be natural; that is at the usual pitch of the individuals ordinary conversation.

"He did not," says one pupil, "articulate the letter *b* plainly enough, in the word because; or if the *b* was sounded, it was not sounded distinctly." "He read too fast, I think;" says another who is asked to give the result of his observations. Will you come then and stand at the desk and read it? the teacher will perhaps say; and thus show us how fast we ought to read? Sometimes, indeed, a pupil may be permitted to read the sentence without leaving his seat; but in general there is an obvious advantage in requiring him to go to the black board, and read it.

"He pronounced the word *usually*," says one, "as if it was spelled *ushally*;" that is with only three syllables." In such a case there is nothing better than to require the pupil who makes the criticism, to read the sentence himself, and give to each and every word and syllable what ought to be its true pronunciation and sound.

These criticisms should be extended to the most minute errors—not indeed at once, but gradually. There is no way, so far as I know, in which such rapid progress can

be made in this most important art—the art of reading—as the one before us ; provided, I mean always, it can be conducted in a proper spirit.

For example, in reading the sentence, “There is a barn in this town which is covered with straw,” a careful critic would be apt to detect many errors. One pupil would be likely to omit to pronounce the first *h* in the word *which* ; or at least to pronounce it so faintly that its place in the word could not be perceived. Another will not sound the *th*, in the word *this*, with sufficient distinctness. Another will give a flat or nasal sound, to the diphthong *ow*, in the word *town*. This last fault is very common among us, both in speaking and reading, and deserves considerable attention. It is indeed a small thing, but we have quite too many *small errors* in our schools ; and it is time some of them were removed.

But these corrections may extend farther. They may extend to the tones, inflections and pauses. In fine, whatever pertains to good reading may, in its own time and place, come under consideration.

Let us recapitulate some of the advantages of this method of teaching the art of reading.

1. The dislike of books, which is very common among the young, is in this way prevented. Having never been imposed

upon them, in connection with tasks, they have no more reluctance to them, than to any thing else. Nay, more than this, the slate and black board exercises, will be a certain means of inducing them to love books and study both, whenever we shall see fit to introduce them.

2. They will be saved the acquisition of many bad or slovenly habits, as the habit of holding books badly; of *thumbing* and *soiling* them; and above all, of having their eyes on them, and pretending to read or study, when their mind and heart are somewhere else.

3. The habit will be prevented—already so fully alluded to—of reading in a monotonous manner. This single acquisition is worth more than all the pains it costs.

4. Much expense for books will thereby be saved. This should always be urged on those who object to procuring slates and pencils for all their young children, on account of the expense. They should be shown that instead of causing them unnecessary expense, it saves them, in the course of the education of a large family of children, many dollars.

5. By furnishing employment to the pupils, it saves—like all other slate and black board exercises—the necessity of a large share of the punishment which it is now *usual* to inflict in school; as a considerable

part of this evil is known to have its origin in the want of suitable employment.

6. And lastly, by preventing the necessity of inflicting degrading punishments, and by promoting, in various other ways, the happiness of the pupils, it has a better *moral* tendency, than the usual array of books.

To those who think a pupil is skilled in the art of reading, in proportion to the number of pages his class are accustomed to read daily, these slate and black board exercises, will, I know, be thought objectionable. Such persons, however, should remember that if long lessons in reading were really necessary, they could be attended to afterward; and to how much better purpose, after this drilling than before, they best know who have tried them. But they may be assured *they are not necessary*.

Nor is it necessary, in order to make a good or perfect reader, that the pupil should be accustomed, as many suppose he should be, to read Pitt's, O'Connell's, and Webster's speeches; and Blair's, Chalmers', Beecher's, and Channing's sermons. How sad has been the mistake of those parents and teachers who have supposed that if children were set to reading such lessons as these—so excellent—they would, *inevitably*, become good readers. That there was an influence—they hardly knew what, or how to define it—to be derived from read-

ing over and over, from day to day, the great thoughts of great or good men, which could not fail to work out in the end, for the most part, good readers; and that where there was a failure, it was owing to the condition—the imperfection I should say—of humanity.

Yet such parents and teachers there have been; such in fact there are still. I wish they were not even numerous. Some such will, I fear, array themselves in opposition to slate and black board exercises, especially in reading. But let such persons wait, with patience, the issue of the experiment, if it seems to them like a mere experiment. The old system has been tried a good while, and we have seen its fruits. Let us try the new system a few years; and see how it is with our pupils then.

For myself, I have never had a doubt of the vast superiority of the new mode. I have spoken as if it might be regarded in the light of an experiment. But, to me, the experiment has been tried, and in this chapter I have been recording its results.

There is hardly a pupil in our common schools who will not learn to read more, by spending half an hour or an hour daily on one or two or three short sentences, which he prepares for himself, than in reading over, in haste, as many pages of that which

he neither understands nor cares any thing at all about.

Let not the idea be rejected that our pupils are best fitted to make their own early reading lessons. Nothing can be better substantiated ; nothing is, as I conceive better established. Let the trial be made fairly, and in good faith, and I am sure every one concerned in it will rejoice at the results.

Whether it will be best to teach our pupils—in the end—to read the sermons and orations of the able and excellent men of past and present times, in both hemispheres, is a question for after consideration. If, however, children of five or six or seven years of age can form reading lessons for themselves which are superior—in their circumstance—to any other, it is difficult to see any reason why they may not do the same when they grow older. For as they advance in knowledge the lessons they prepare will advance accordingly. Still it may be well on various accounts, to read other men's thoughts as a class exercise ; at a more advanced period of their pupilage.

CHAPTER X.

ARITHMETIC.

It may be thought by some that the introduction of black boards into many of our schools already, and their frequent use in the study of arithmetic, especially *when visitors come in*, will preclude the necessity of saying much under this head. Yet is it not a fact that, even in the study of arithmetic, the use of this highly important instrument is almost wholly overlooked, at least practically? Is it not common for teachers, after a little attention to it, at first, to lay it aside, and proceed much in the way to which they have always been accustomed?

This, however, should not be so. Nothing can be more convenient or more useful in the study of arithmetic, by classes, than slates and black boards, especially the latter. I speak here, moreover, of teaching in the usual way of our best schools. I think, however, that there is a more excellent way of teaching arithmetic.

Arithmetic is no doubt one of the first exercises to be presented to the youthful *mind*. I am not about to say at what age

this or any other branch should be commenced ; the giving of such directions forms no part of my present purpose. What I say is, that whenever the work of inculcating the sciences is begun, that of arithmetic, to a certain extent, should receive our earliest attention.

It has been usual, of late years, to extol mental arithmetic. Now it would be foolish for me to condemn what has been so highly commended by many wiser men ; and yet I cannot help thinking *sensible* arithmetic—arithmetic which is *addressed*, I mean, to the *senses*—should go before and accompany what is called mental arithmetic. For want of this, much, I fear, that is done in our primary and common schools, under the idea of studying mental arithmetic, is of little practical utility.

What does it avail a child, for example, to be able to solve, almost instantly, as many can, such a question as the following ; found in Colburn's Mental Arithmetic.

“From Boston to Roxbury it is three miles ; from Roxbury to Dedham, six miles ; from Dedham to Walpole, eleven miles ; from Walpole to Wrentham, four miles ; from Wrentham to Attleborough, four miles ; from Attleborough to Pawtucket, nine miles ; from Pawtucket to Providence, four miles ; how many miles is it from Boston to Providence ?”

For although there is no great difficulty in reckoning up three, six, eleven, four, four, nine, and four, and finding that they all make forty-one, yet what does the child know after having done this, which he did not know before? You say, and you say justly, perhaps, that he knows it is 41 miles from Boston to Providence; and you may possibly tell me that he knows the various distances of the places between, from each other. But is there any real knowledge in all this? Might not a parrot be taught to say it is 41 miles from Boston to Providence; or it is four miles from Wrentham to Attleborough? And yet what evidence should we have that either the child or the parrot had any clear ideas of the distance between Boston and Providence, and of that between Wrentham and Attleborough?—How can a person get any ideas from the words four miles, or forty-one miles who knows nothing about the meaning of *one* mile? Yet I am much mistaken if one pupil in ten has any thing like a correct idea of distance—miles, rods or furlongs—yards, feet, or inches.

There is a work to be done preliminary to all this; and, indeed, preliminary to all other processes in mental arithmetic. In the performance of this work, the slate and black board may render us a very important service. They do not, indeed, give us

sensible objects themselves to compute ; they do not furnish us, as in the foregoing case, the hills and vales, and level ground of which a mile, or even a yard of the earth's surface is made up, and say to us ; Here is a mile, or a yard, as the case might be. Still they furnish us with something like a substitute for the objects with which they *cannot* furnish us.

A child who has not learned it at home already, can learn from the black board and the slate—i. e. with the teachers aid—how much an inch is, and how much a foot and a yard are, respectively. And having found out how much a foot and a yard are, and become familiar with them in their application to objects in the room, especially the floor of the school room, it is not difficult to show him, by repeating the yard five and a half times, on the floor, how much a rod is. This is as far as we can go within the school room, and as far, in this particular exercise, as the slate and black board will accompany us.

Now in order to understand clearly how much a mile is, the child ought to make the distance of a rod his measure, and apply it to the play ground, the common, the road near the school house, and in fine to several different roads or streets. He finds, perhaps, that the play ground is ten rods long ; the common forty ; the road adjoining the

school house, in its straight part, before it comes to a bend, just eighty. This he may be told is a quarter of a mile ; and if he knows how much a quarter of a thing is, it is easy, by repeating this, in some way four times, to get the idea of a mile ; especially if some road is shown him which is just four times as long as the portion which he already knows is a quarter of a mile.

Perhaps the elementary ideas which a pupil needs in order to be able to talk intelligibly in the study of arithmetic—or in fact in any thing else—about *miles*, are among the most difficult, (except perhaps years,) which could be mentioned. Yet, they must be acquired, or the pupil is talking about that which has no meaning, to him.

The elementary ideas which go to make up a pound, or a bushel, or a barrel, or a dollar, are confessedly much more easy to be obtained ; though children seldom obtain correctly even these. What child has any clear and definite idea what relation a cent or ten cents have to one hundred cents, or a dollar ? or an ounce to a pound ? or a quart to a bushel or a barrel ? Yet is it not obvious that these elementary ideas are the very ideas he needs as a preliminary to all study which, like arithmetic, involves or includes the frequent use of these terms ? And what are like the slate and the black board, as

means or instruments of acquiring this knowledge ?

In proof of this let a child be shown, by a figure—say of a cup—on the black board, about how large a vessel must be in order to hold a quart ; or, what is better still, show him a quart measure. Perhaps he has seen one—if he has, the cup itself, or the rough drawing on the black board will remind him of it. Next make eight such drawings on the black board, for eight quart measures, and tell him that these, i. e. the contents of eight such cups, poured together would make a peck. Afterwards he may be shown, without the least difficulty, that four pecks make a bushel. But in order to make the whole thing clear and definite in his mind, curved lines to represent both a peck and a bushel basket should be made, on the black board, or if not these, at least three sides of a square, to give a view of wooden measures for a bushel, a peck, &c.

Or, once more, we wish perhaps to show him that a dollar is made up of one hundred cents, or ten dimes. We first show him a cent, and then a dime ; and tell him that ten of these copper cents are worth as much, or will buy just as much, as a silver piece called a dime. Show him, moreover, making on the black board ten about the dimensions of a cent to count them ; and then

standing that they represent cents, tell him that the ten are worth just as much—and in fact make just as much—as one dime, represented by the smaller circle. Again show him that ten dimes represented by ten smaller circles, make up just one dollar represented by a larger circle, in the same way.

It is not intended, here, I say once more, to prescribe the exact method which every teacher shall pursue ; or the precise instruments by means of which he shall make the intended impression on the minds of his pupils. If the things themselves could be had—as they can be at home, but not always at the school room—the measures, some grain or beans, a suitable number of pieces of money, &c. they would doubtless be preferable to any representations, such as those to which I have referred, on the slate or the black board. But some preliminary instruction of this sort, I say once more, is indispensable ; or there will be no true or real knowledge, in the particular line which we are now considering.

I might even go much farther than I have yet done, and affirm—and that, too, without fear of contradiction by any who are familiar with the juvenile mind and habits—that a pupil may talk very learnedly about mental arithmetic, and may be able to solve such a question as that before us, with

great rapidity, and yet know nothing at all to any practical purpose about the relative proportion of numbers, even of small numbers. Is there one pupil in three who clearly and distinctly perceives that if Roxbury is three miles from Boston, and Dedham six miles from Roxbury, (the space between Roxbury and Dedham,) is just twice as great as that between Roxbury and Boston? Or, *vice versa*, that the distance between the latter two places is just half that between the other two.*

Some may think that I under-value, or at least under-rate, the powers of the young mind; but let those who think so, examine for themselves and see. Let it be remembered, however, that I am speaking here of young pupils; and not of those who are fifteen, or sixteen years old. Let those, I say, who are skeptical on this point, examine for themselves.

But this relation of distance is soon and easily taught with the aid of the black board, especially to those who have been already introduced to map making. A map of two or three towns may be drawn, and lines passed through them for roads. Thus in the case before us, Boston and Roxbury may be drawn, together with the Pr

* In point of fact Dedham is seven miles from Roxbury; but this mistake is of little consequence in the present mathematical questions and exercises.

turnpike, passing through the latter. The road from Boston centre to Roxbury may be divided, by means of the chalk, into three equal parts, representing three *miles*; and the road from Roxbury to Dedham into six equal parts; the divisions to correspond in extent to the others; and let each pupil see the proportion and the difference.† Then let the road be extended—but for this purpose, the drawing should be on a scale small enough to admit it—to Providence, marking off into miles the spaces between the several towns. Now, if pupils will be honest, I have no doubt nearly all will at once acknowledge that till now they had no idea at all of the relative proportion of the numbers, three, six, eleven, four, &c.

Once more. “Seven times seven make forty-nine,” thousands and millions of voices have vociferated, in our schools, when they had no more idea of the relative proportion of the several sevens to each other than if they had never uttered an articulate sound. All, *all* is mere memory work; parrot work. I do not say I would have none of it; for that is quite another question. But *this* I do affirm, that such memory work is not knowledge; *real, practical knowledge*. Till a pupil learns, in one way, or another, by the intervention of sensible objects of some

† Thus: —————.

sort, or their representatives, (as dots or squares, or circles, on the black board or slate,) the true relation which seven ones, and seven sevens have to each other, he is no arithmetician. His mental arithmetic, as it is called, has no permanent basis, but is built on sand.

How easy it is to establish this relation of numbers, by means of seven rows of seven dots each? Or, if we choose, squares or circles may be used instead of dots. For various reasons, however, I prefer the dots, or if not dots, the representations of various little objects, as beans, corns, pins, small pieces of money, and the like.

Here is a specimen, on a small scale, of what may be done by the black board, on a larger one.

```

o o o o o o o
o o o o o o o
o o o o o o o
o o o o o o o
o o o o o o o
o o o o o o o
o o o o o o o

```

What has been said, in this chapter in the chapter on map making inquisitive and intelligent the pupils also, wh thirsting after kno

slate and black board exercises. How little have we thought of the vast amount of preliminary instruction which it is so needful to give; and how little of the value of those instruments by which it can so readily be given !

But we will take for granted that the preliminary knowledge to which I allude has been given, and that the pupils have been taught how to form the nine digits with the cypher. They know nothing, as yet of any combinations of the digits or figures, nor of their properties, individual or collective. Preparatory to the study of written arithmetic, here, too, is a considerable work for the slate and black board.

One of the first exercises of this sort is to learn to write the figures in perpendicular rows. Thus :

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 8 |
| 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 2 |
| 5 | 6 |
| 6 | 1 |
| 7 | 3 |
| 8 | 9 |
| 9 | 0 |
| 0 | 7 |

It requires both skill and practice to place figures in perpendicular rows. It is not so

difficult to write them in rows horizontally, as below.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 0 |
| 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

Some think it best to draw lines on the slate and black board, both perpendiculars and horizontals, letting the lines cross each other to form squares; a figure being then written to each square. But I do not think this advisable. If a scholar begins to be dependent on ruled lines, he will be apt to continue dependent. I would, therefore, at once place my dependence on the eye, and on long practice.

Here, in this matter, of writing figures, pupils will learn chiefly from imitation. The copy of the teacher on the black board will be worth every thing to them. As fast as the teacher puts down a figure, let it be imitated; and when a row is copied or a sufficient number of rows for a lesson, let the whole be corrected by the teacher or a monitor; or, what is perhaps still better, by the pupil himself, standing at or before the black board.

Perhaps large lessons, (or at least deep perpendicular rows,) will be as useful as any other in teaching pupils how to write figures with method and precision, like the following.

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 2 5 7 8 1 6 1 6 4 | 8 5 4 3 2 |
| 3 4 5 7 3 8 9 0 9 | 1 6 5 9 0 |
| 1 7 3 2 4 3 3 5 6 | 8 3 9 1 7 |
| 2 2 1 6 0 7 1 7 7 | 7 2 3 0 0 |
| 4 0 1 3 6 8 3 3 5 | 9 6 7 8 7 |
| 7 2 9 4 6 1 5 8 6 | 0 6 4 0 9 |
| 1 9 0 3 2 4 8 4 8 | 8 3 4 6 9 |
| 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 | 7 6 5 4 3 |
| 1 2 3 4 4 6 7 8 9 | 2 1 9 8 0 |
| 3 2 1 6 4 2 9 8 7 | 5 3 8 6 7 |
| 1 5 2 6 3 8 4 0 0 | 4 3 6 5 0 |

Another good exercise is to accustom them to follow the lines correctly, where the numbers, or sums are not of uniform value. The following is a specimen of a lesson of this sort.

| |
|-------------------|
| 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 7 1 |
| 6 9 1 8 4 3 0 |
| 3 7 4 3 6 7 6 |
| 4 0 6 8 0 2 1 4 |
| 3 0 6 8 6 |
| 2 9 4 2 |
| 3 4 5 |
| 2 1 |
| 0 9 |

Here is an example, in which the sum numbers are still more irregular.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | 2 | 6 | 1 | 9 |
| 8 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 8 | |
| | | 3 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 0 | |
| | | | | | 4 | 4 | |
| | | 7 | 8 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| 6 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 4 |

It is well known to be much more difficult to keep perpendicular or vertical rows distinct, where the horizontal ones are of different lengths; and yet it is highly desirable to acquire the habit of being able to do so. This, as I have already said, is the appropriate work of the black board and the slates, and should be persevered in, till a pretty good share of skill is acquired, in the exercise.

Every teacher who has had any acquaintance at all with the black board, knows how useful it is in teaching numeration, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; indeed all the various rules and processes which belong to arithmetic. It is hardly necessary that I should dwell, therefore, on these. I will only say, once for all, proceed slowly, and do not suffer the anxiety of the pupils to get forward from one rule to another, or from the black board to the book, or that of their parents on their behalf, urge you on a step faster than the good of the pupils obviously demands. I

know how difficult it is not to hurry on ; and this makes me the more anxious to prevent it. Make haste, indeed, every where, and in all things ; or at least, waste no time. And yet there is much of meaning and of good sense, too, in the saying or maxim, which I have so often quoted ; " Make haste slowly."

If tables are to be committed to memory, such as the multiplication table, tables of weight and measure, tables of time, &c. it is well to make this, too, a slate and black board exercise. Not, indeed, that I would ever write the whole multiplication table on the black board, or indeed the whole of any other table at once ; but only such parts as were suitable for a single lesson. But when written, in this way, I would make great efforts to have the whole portion, which is put down, at one time *committed to memory*. They may transfer it from the black board to their slates or not, as may seem best and most useful, in the circumstances.

It may excite a little surprise, perhaps, that I should put my thoughts on the use of tables, with the methods of teaching them, at the *close* of my chapter on Arithmetic, rather than at the beginning. Nevertheless I am quite confident that this is the proper place for it. Many a scholar is disgusted with arithmetic forever, by being compelled,

at the outset, to commit to memory a host of unintelligible tables, rules, &c.

If addition tables, subtraction tables, multiplication tables, tables of weight, measure, time, currency, &c. &c. are to be committed to memory at all, let them be in small portions of each at a time, and let one table, or portion of a table, be thoroughly learned before proceeding to another. Thus, if we commence with the table of avoirdupois weight, let that occupy the black board, (especially if there be a smaller black board and a larger one,) till it is wholly committed to memory. If the multiplication table is the subject, let that be followed up till it is mastered. Only a part of this long table, however, should stand on the slate at one time, say a single division of it, as from 4 times 4 are 16 to 4 times 12 are 48.

Many teachers insist on having a pupil commit to memory the principles, &c. of each rule, before he is permitted to work in that rule; but the utility of this requisition is to say the least doubtful. I have thought it better—I still think so—so to order things, as to have the rule appear to be derived from the exercise under it, rather than the exercises from the rule. In this way, as growing out of the exercises, I think a rule simply expressed, and written down on the black board, and by each pupil on

his slate, much more likely to be effectually impressed on the memory, than if it were merely committed to memory, without being written.

CHAPTER XI.

GEOGRAPHY.

The pupil having already become familiar with making geometrical figures and drawing simple maps, that is outlines of places with which he is familiarly acquainted, and having, above all, obtained correct ideas of distance, so as to have as it were a basis for his ideas to rest upon, is now ready to go forward with a more extended study of geography.

In pursuance of this branch, however, I would keep in view, as much as possible, the general principle already laid down and insisted on—that of beginning at home, in everything; or in other words, proceeding, always, from the known to the unknown. This principle is particularly applicable to the study of geography.

And yet, important a principle as it is, I cannot say I would never depart from it. On the contrary I am strongly inclined to think that we ought to depart from it, at times; that we should teach not only geography but some other branches, both by *analysis* and by *synthesis*.

indeed, but after the pupil has made some progress.

Geography should be begun with map making; taking it up, perhaps, where it was left, in the exercises described in the chapter on that subject. It will be recollected that little was then proposed, however, except the merest *outlines* of the school room and grounds, the commons and roads near that, and perhaps the town in which they are situated. Nothing was said of making out, on the county and state maps proposed, the rivers, mountains, and other natural objects which render a map so attractive as well as valuable; and the location of which, by the learner, is so useful an exercise.

In studying geography, *as* geography, however, it would be of the highest importance to insert, in all our maps, the rivers, mountains, lakes, seas, &c. The position of cities, towns, &c. should also be indicated in some way. In general it is preferable to write the names of places, near the little circle or square which is made to point out its exact location.

In commencing the study of geography regularly, the teacher should always begin with the black board; and with the town in which his school is located. He should designate not only its shape, but its principal roads, with its village or villages; its rivers

and brooks, (those at least of any size ;) its mountains and hills ; its lakes, seas, and bays ; and even its principal churches, factories, &c. To this end, it is true, the *teacher* must have books and maps, unless, indeed, he is a complete encyclopedia of topographical knowledge ; but what then ? No man can be a professional man, not even a mechanic—I mean a skilful and profitable one—without the implements of his occupation or profession.

Suppose a teacher and his pupils in Hartford, about to draw an outline of the town.* Shall it be drawn according to the size of which it appears on our larger maps of the state ? Or shall it be somewhat larger ? To draw it as large as it is represented, on some of the maps of the city and town would be, obviously, quite inconvenient, because though there might be room enough for it on the black board, there would not be on the slates. Besides, it should not occupy all the space even of one side of a slate. There should be room enough for a part or all of the contiguous towns, in order to show its relations and boundaries. Perhaps it is best for a teacher to draw it as large as can be copied on the smallest slates, with such

* I have selected Hartford, as a point from which to begin, both because I am more familiar with it than most others ; and also because its boundaries with the adjacent towns are particularly interesting.

room for boundaries as would be necessary.

The map of Hartford might be drawn on the black board about three inches long, from north to south, and of proportional width ; viz, from an inch and a half to two inches. Hartford is almost a parallelogram or long square ; though its eastern boundary is somewhat irregular, being formed by the river.

The Connecticut river is a line so distinct and prominent that portions of the towns east of it would hardly be necessary, or if necessary at all, only very small portions of them. A very narrow strip of East Hartford and East Windsor would include the central villages and churches. But in order to make its relation to Farmington and Avon on the west as prominent as it ought to be, it would be well to have the mere outlines, (in fainter strokes,) of both these places drawn, and also the southern portion of Bloomfield and Windsor. I would include about half of Wethersfield, (the more important part,) and a corner of Britain society in Berlin. Farther than this, unless the slates were all of sufficient length to admit it with freedom, I would not go ; except it were to the eastward beyond the river.

Much importance should be attached to the correctness of each of the town lines. Thus beginning with the line between Hart-

tord and Farmington and Avon—which is nearly straight, and runs almost due north and south, and might for simplicity's sake be represented exactly so—I would draw this just three inches long ; and every pupil should be required to do the same. This line I would make the nucleus, as it were, of the map ; on which, or around which, I would attach or connect the rest.

It is important to begin, always, with the simplest line, provided it is of sufficient length to form a proper starting point. The importance too, of having each pupil trained to the art of drawing perpendicular, horizontal and other lines, as well as of judging in regard to measures of length—inches and feet especially—cannot but be obvious.

From the bottom of this north and south line—the western boundary of Hartford—strike off one at right angles, that is horizontally, to the river, of just two inches. That at the north should be made next, but is more difficult. A line should be carried from the top of the long line or western boundary, horizontally, or eastward, nearly one inch ; then it should be turned exactly south, a very little distance, perhaps about the twelfth of an inch, after which it should be again carried horizontally, or eastward, a little more than two thirds of an inch. The eastern line or river alone remains to be made ; and will be the most difficult of all.

If, however, a teacher has studied his subject well before hand, is skilful at drawing, and has a correct eye as to distance, he will not be long in leading his pupils to the formation of very good outlines of the town of Hartford. Many corrections will no doubt be necessary in the progress of the exercise, especially in the construction of the river line; but time and patience will enable him and his pupils to make them;—perfect accuracy, of course, not being expected.

The additional lines—intended to represent the boundaries, either partially or wholly, of the adjoining towns—will be very easily added to the former; especially as they are, in general, extensions of them, or mere off-sets from them. They should be added as soon as the foregoing outline is completed; but need not be made with so much accuracy. One, for example, should be carried due north from the northwest corner of Hartford—say two thirds of an inch; from which a line carried westward, two inches, will form the north line of Avon, and another parallel to it and about an inch and a quarter south of it will form the southern line of the same township. The line running westward and south westward between Farmington and Britain cannot be so well described here, but is pretty easily made.

A correct idea of the points of the compass, is also, as will be seen, highly indispensable; but may be soon and easily acquired, in connection with such maps. There are, I know, a great many of our pupils—some, I fear, who can hardly be called young ones—who know as little, (as Joseph Emerson has well said,) what we mean when we tell them that the top of a map is north, and the bottom south, as they would if we should tell them the top is *oro* and the bottom *cluro*. But here they see that Bloomfield and Windsor are at the top of the map, and they know that these places are north of Hartford—at least most of our pupils do. The river Connecticut, they find winding along the eastern side of the map, and they know that this is in accordance with their own daily observation. Wethersfield and the State Prison they know to be south; and here, on the bottom of the map, they find them. So Farmington they know to be west; and in the west they accordingly find it.

Now, I do not say, that there are not other ways—some of them more expeditious even—in which to get a correct idea of north and south on the map; but I do say that this seems to me to be the true way, and almost the only true way.

But the map is not completed when the

boundary lines are drawn, and even when the pupil becomes familiar with the relative position of the adjacent places, and their boundaries, according to the points of the compass. The small river sometimes called Little River, which comes in from the west, is to be drawn; the city is to be located, and West Hartford; and several objects are to be marked in the city itself, as the College, the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, the Retreat for the Insane, the Orphan Asylum, the State House, &c. It might be well, moreover, to mark the situation of the mountains, in the borders of Avon and Farmington, on which are to be seen Wadsworth tower.

It is indeed true that not every town and its vicinity, are so favorably situated for the purpose we are now considering as Hartford. And yet some may be more so. There are, in truth, very few that have not within them, a number of natural or artificial objects sufficiently great to arrest and detain for a short time the attention of a class of pupils. There are few of our towns, which have in them no rivers, brooks, ponds, mountains, hills, or caves; perhaps none which are without church, factory, literary, or benevolent institution, court house, or jail.

We are not, however, to study the geography of a native town, and the towns

adjacent, for the sake of a knowledge of those towns, in itself considered, so much as for the sake of *making a beginning*, by doing that which is equivalent to what is called, by mechanics, getting the use of tools. The pupil needs to understand the use of a map ; how it is made, and how to make it. The longer, therefore, he can be detained on this first lesson, without losing his interest in the exercise, the better ; because he will thereby become, as he should be, thoroughly acquainted with the terms of geography, and of map making as connected with geography.

Every map, at first, should be as mere an outline as possible. The fewer the lines and marks, the more distinct and permanent will be the impression on the pupils' minds. I would not, therefore, be in haste to fill up even the map of one's own native town. A few only of the more striking features should be inserted. Other things may be talked about ; and the pupils may even be told where they should be placed on the map, were they to be put down. But farther than this, at first, it will not be well to go.

Another exercise is necessary, in order to fit the pupil to go forward with his studies with intelligence. He must be taught to make a map of his native town, on a reduced scale. Take the case which has just

been considered. Draw the outlines of Hartford on a smaller scale than before. Let the first line formed—the western boundary—be but one inch, instead of three; and let the rest be in proportion.

This will prepare the way for making a map of the whole of Hartford county. For on this reduced scale, any slate in school would hold all the towns in the county, without the least possible difficulty. At the same time we should accustom the pupil to a dissected map of the same county. He can hardly be made too familiar with the geography of his own town and county, or with the shape and position, relatively, of the States and Territories of our Union. He should also be made familiar with the general shape of the United States and its Territories, taken as a whole, and the general position of the same with relation to the countries around. For this purpose he must be able to put together a dissected map of North America; to which, subsequently, we should add South America.

How far it is best to proceed in this way in this going from the known to the unknown—I am not certain. A time will arrive, however, when the question of the shape of the ~~the~~ will naturally come in. This may be when the teacher is conversing with his pupils about the Connecticut river. They may

ask, Where does the water in Connecticut river come from? or, Where does it go? and, If the rivers are constantly running into the ocean, why does not the latter get full?

Or the question of the earth's rotundity may not come up till some knowledge is acquired of the shape and relative position of the continents and oceans, and the teacher begins to converse with them about going from place to place; as from America to Asia, to the South Sea Islands, or to China. Some ingenious pupil may be struck with surprise to find that we can get to China both by going eastward and westward, and may ask an explanation. If so, this will be the proper time to inform the class that the earth is round; and to make, by means of the black board, every possible explanation. I say every possible one; because it will not be possible to make the subject very intelligible without a globe of some sort, if it is simply an apple.

And yet when the knowledge has once been imparted and received that the earth is round, a great deal may be done by means of slates and black boards to make the matter more intelligible and *practical* than otherwise it would be. For very few pupils who have long been familiar with maps and globes, and who are able to tell us, parrot like, that China is on the opposite

side of the globe from that on which they stand, and Cape Horn, a quarter of the way round the globe, have any distinct idea of the real rotundity of the earth, after all.

For proof of this, let one of these unfledged geographers be asked to tell which way a cannon should be pointed in order to shoot a ball, if the thing were possible, to China. Would he not say, at once, that it ought to be pointed eastward? And when asked to point his own finger in the same direction, would he not hold it horizontally with respect to the earth's surface? Would he not do the same with respect to Cape Horn? And yet, if the earth is round, this could not be right. To point the finger or a piece of cannon toward China—that is really and truly to do so—it must be placed perpendicularly with respect to the surface of the earth, and not horizontally; and to point to Cape Horn, it must be placed at an angle of about 45 degrees with the earth's surface.

Now all this, and a thousand other kindred facts, tending to show that the earth is practically round, as well as theoretically so, might be made intelligible on the black board; where a globe was not at hand. More than even this; I am not sure that the black board is not better for this purpose than a globe possibly can be.

Let it be required of the pupil to tell, as

above, in what course China really lies from New England. To make the matter plain to him, the teacher may draw a circle on the black board, representing, that is designed to represent, a section, or slice, of the earth from west to east, or a section of the artificial globe, in the same direction. Then by showing him, that here, on the upper part of the circle, is New England; and there on the lower part is China, and drawing a line from the former to the latter, we may make the thing intelligible to him. Here, the teacher says, a cannon ball shot off from New England to China, must go in the precise course in which I am drawing this line.

Again, let it be required to find out the course of Cape Horn from New England. To this end we make a circle on the black board representing a section or slice of the earth through from north to south, and say; Here is New England and there is Cape Horn; and now you see that if I draw a straight line, with the piece of chalk, from New England to Cape Horn, it passes in an oblique direction, or 45 degrees below the horizon.

But to return to our work of map making, and map dissecting. Nothing, as it seems to me, is so useful in studying geography, as the simultaneous use of the slate and black board, and dissected maps.

seriously doubt whether it is of any real advantage to put books into the hands of a child who is studying geography, till he has been drilled at least two or three years with slate, black board, and a globe. Maps he needs to see—good maps—no matter how many ; but not books.

Granted that in order to have the school derive the full benefit of this plan of instruction in geography, the teacher must be master of the science. He must be able to draw, at a moments warning, the outlines of any country in the world ; and not only to draw the outlines, but to fill it up. Not that a teacher ought himself to do either of these very often, at least without any aid from the pupils. He should be continually referring every thing to their memory, judgment, &c.

To recur, once more, to the map of Hartford, on the smallest or last mentioned scale. This being drawn, the teacher says ; I wish now to add Wethersfield ; on which side of Hartford shall I place it ? If they say, on the south side, he asks them which the south side is. Here, he says, is Hartford, on the black board ; you see its boundaries ; shall I place Wethersfield at top or bottom, or at one side ? Or, if at one side, on which side ? A large map of the whole state, with every township distinctly marked off by

lines, will of course be, in pursuance of this plan, quite a necessary article.

Having drawn the boundaries of Wethersfield, all except perhaps the eastern, he asks, Is this right? What is wanting in order to have it right? Which boundary is wanting? What forms this boundary? In what direction does the river run? From what town or towns does the river separate it? What other towns do you know of, which are bounded on their eastern side, by Connecticut river, besides Hartford and Wethersfield? What towns do you know of that are bounded on their western side by the same river?

Here is one of the boundaries of Wethersfield; from what place or places does it separate it? From what places does this boundary separate it? Is there any river in Wethersfield? Are there any lakes in it? Any mountains? Any seas, gulfs, or bays? Let me now hear you mention its boundaries, in course.

No teacher would be *well* prepared for these exercises, *in Hartford* who was not able, with the aid of a large map of Connecticut, to draw the outlines of any township in Hartford county, or indeed any one adjoining the river, below it. He should be so familiar with drawing, moreover, as to be able to draw the outlines of these places with as much rapidity as he would make

the figures used in arithmetic, or the capital letters used in writing.*

So of the States of the Union. To be able to teach well, a teacher should be so familiar with the shape of every State, as to be able, with a good map of the United States before him, to draw the outlines of any given state, in a moment, and to draw it, too, with accuracy ; I mean as to its size, proportions, &c.

Suppose he is to draw the outlines of the State of Connecticut. Now he should have so clear an idea of the shape of the state, in his mind, as not to need any aid at all. Yet in order to be accurate, it is well, always, for him to have a good map before him, at least of the United States, and occasionally to cast his eye over it. We can never be too accurate or too perfect in these things, when we consider how permanent the impression is which they are to make on the minds of our pupils.

With this skill, he can never fail to find employment for his pupils—useful employment, too. With the map of the State of Connecticut before him, he draws the outline of one of its counties, and says ; This represents the shape of one of the counties in Connecticut, can you tell me which it is ?

* The ingenious teacher cannot fail to be able to apply what is said here, to his own town, county, &c. and to the towns and counties adjacent.

What county lies next to it on the west?
 What on the east? What on the north?
 What on the south?

So in regard to the map of the United States. He draws the boundaries of one of the States, and asks what state it is; what others join it; and in what direction they are. He inquires, also, the position of one state with respect to another. Thus he asks, which way is the state which I have drawn from that in which you live? Suppose it to be Maryland. He asks which way Maryland is from Ohio—from Vermont—from South Carolina—from Missouri—from Michigan—from Maine—from Louisiana, &c.

So, in fact, in regard to any other map—the map of the world not excepted. He draws the outlines of Africa, and asks about its boundaries, its bearing from us—from Europe—from Asia—from New Holland—from the South Sea Islands, &c. Or he draws an ocean, a sea, or a lake, and asks what ocean, sea, or lake it is; how it is bounded; what of the same class are smaller, or larger, &c.

We hence see that it is not in the mere drawing of the outlines of countries that a teacher can profitably use a black board. He may draw rivers as well as countries. Let him draw the Missouri, the St. Lawrence, the Oregon, the Oronoke,

zon, the Nile, the Irawaddy, the Seine, or the Rhine. Let him draw them, moreover, in their natural position, and of a proper length and size and relation to one another. Thus the Nile and the Oronoke, he should represent as having a northern course ; the Amazon and St. Lawrence an eastern ; the Oregon a western, &c. Let him, then, for another exercise, ask what countries lie on, that is, near, these respective rivers ? What mountains give rise to them ? What cities stand on their banks ?

So interesting—so exceedingly absorbing and interesting—are these exercises, in the hands of a judicious teacher, who has a large black board at his command, that I doubt whether a better method could be adopted, at least in a great many instances, to silence a boisterous school, or to turn the current of roguery in a particular corner of it, than that of making some river, as the Nile, and after describing it, asking questions on it, by way of review.

I have hitherto mentioned but a very few things to be attended to in the course of these introductory exercises, because I have believed, and still believe that the most accurate and distinct notions, on this subject, are always obtained by studying, carefully, at first the outlines of each country—not
 e^r own. The boundaries and
 la with the rivers, mountains,

lakes, seas, and perhaps a few more of the more striking natural features of a country, with a little attention to the cities, is perhaps, really all which is useful, at the first.

But when considerable time has elapsed, and these topics become generally familiar, there are a variety of other exercises which should come in. One of the most striking, not to say the most useful, is the following.

The teacher draws the boundary of a country—say France—and having done this, puts down his crayon on the northern part of it, and asks, “Were we transported, in an instant, to this spot, what should we probably see? Should we see fields and roads fenced out as they are here? What sort of houses? What colored people? How would they be dressed? How do they travel? What should we see them doing, besides cultivating the soil? What crops should we see? What fruit trees or fruits? What domestic animals? What wild animals? What forest trees?”

Again, just where I place my staff, in the country whose outline I have now drawn, (which we will suppose is North America,) is a great lake; do you know what it is? With what other lakes does it connect? Into what river do they pour their contents? Into what sea or ocean does the river empty itself? What other large lakes are there in the world besides this and

Which way from us is this lake? Which way is it from Europe—from Asia—from Africa—from South America?

But I am afraid I have made suggestions in regard to so many exercises that the main thing, after all, will be forgotten. This is map making—continued, I had almost said, incessant map making. Every thing in regard to the study of geography, intelligently, depends upon this. But in order to this, we must begin right. He who can make a map of his own town, and county, and an outline of his native state with correctness, can make at least the outlines of almost any other part of the world.

The pupils of our common schools ought to be able to make a map of any part of the world—state, country, island, sea, ocean, or continent—with as much facility and correctness as a skilful teacher of music will write notes, or a rapid mathematician make figures. Nor is there the least difficulty of acquiring such skill, with time and patience, and suitable instruction.

Nor is there, as I believe, any want of time for all this. Immense, almost, is the time wasted by many, nay most of our pupils, in the progress of their course of common school instruction. Had we but some philosopher's stone to transmute all into gold, how great would be the advantage! The discovery of such a power of transmutation,

more than any philosopher's stor

e.

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CHAPTER XII.

HISTORY.

The study of History, like that of Geography and many other branches, should begin at home, with the known. This, I mean, is the way to begin with those who are wholly ignorant of the subject, and consequently more or less destitute of interest in regard to it. No matter whether they are old or young—eight years old or eighteen—they should commence their studies alike, both as respects time and place.

Admitting this, history should most obviously follow geography. The latter science, pursued in the spirit of the forgoing chapter, is exactly the sort of preparation, needed for its pursuit. It lays open to the pupil the great theatre of human action, as it is; and even introduces him to the present actors. But who have been the other actors, in by gone periods? And what have been their actions?—To obtain a satisfactory reply to these queries is to study history.

To begin this, in common schools, we should commence as with most other things

which are taught there, with the black board. Let the teacher draw on it the map of the nearest place to the school house, which includes the scene of some interesting event of American History. If there is any such in his own town, so much the better. Thus a teacher in Hartford, after drawing the outlines or boundaries of the town might mark the spot where the Charter Oak stands. Or one in Charlestown, near Boston, might mark the spot where Bunker Hill stands, or one in Plymouth, the place of the Plymouth rock.

But it will be objected, I suppose, that few places are so distinguished as these. No, they are not. And yet there are but few places, where we cannot find something which will naturally lead us back to the history of that place. In a place where I was teaching school, in one instance—in truth not a mile from the school house—was a spot called French hill, from the fact that the French army of La Fayette once encamped there. This afforded a fine text for beginning upon the history of America. But if nothing of this kind should exist in the town where the school was, let a map of the county be drawn. If this, by possibility should include nothing striking, the boundaries of the state might be drawn, which would certainly answer the purpose.

But suppose the worst. Suppose this

little manual should find its way to some state or territory in which no event has ever occurred, so striking as to attract attention, and be made the ready key or nucleus of other events. Such a supposition which is indeed almost an impossibility, but we will venture to make it. Still, however, which of us has not had an aged friend or acquaintance who was engaged more or less either in the war of the revolution or in that of 1812 ?

In the latter case we might begin by drawing a map or the boundaries of a map which would include some place or places which our friend visited. Thus suppose one of my friends or townsmen was in the Indian battle of Tippecanoe, where the late President Harrison won his laurels, as it is so often expressed. Let me then draw a map of the river Wabash and its principal branches, with perhaps the boundaries of the state of Indiana; and begin our oral and black board studies of history from that point. Or to come nearer home, suppose I have had relatives or friends—some of whom are still living—who witnessed the execution of Major Andre, a British officer of the revolutionary war, at Tappan, near Hudson's river, in the state of New York. In that case, draw a map of Hudson's river, and an outline of the country above New York, between that city and Poughkeepsie, and

having marked the spots where Andre was taken and executed, proceed to tell the pupils about him ; who he was ; what it was for which he was executed ; by whose orders he was executed ; the names of some of the other American officers, &c. This would lead, perhaps, to conversation about them, especially Washington. And to converse freely and fully about Washington, from his birth to his death, is to go over, in a cursory manner, nearly the whole of our American history, for the last century.

There is no sort of difficulty in finding a path, if we desire it, which will lead our pupils back to the history of one of our wars—that of 1812, or that of 1776. And when we once get them interested, in this way, the story of one event will lead us to speak of another event, or of another individual who was concerned with that event ; that to something else ; and thus on, to the history of our country from the first ; and then to that of other countries.

In all this, however, we have continual need of the black board. Let us suppose the case of Andre, as before mentioned, and some of the conversation which might arise from it.

Having drawn our map of the river Hudson, and marked the spot where now stand New York, Peekskill, Esopus, West Point, Newburg, and Poughkeepsie, we next mark

a spot for Tappan. Here, we say, using our position, Andre was executed. But he was not taken here ; he was taken over there, the east side of the river ; marking that spot also. Then, again, in speaking of his object, we should have occasion to say something of West Point as it now is ; its military school, the object of such a school, &c.

Conversation on this subject, moreover, might and would lead to say something of Washington. Who was Washington ?—When and where was he born ? When and where did he die ? At the same time, we should find it useful to draw an outline of Virginia, and mark the place of Washington's birth, as well as that of Mount Vernon, the place of his residence and death.

And in proceeding with his history, which is never tiresome to the young, how often would it be useful to seize the crayon or the chalk, and sketch an outline map of one place, or river, or another ? And more than this even—at least if we are as familiar with drawing as I shall show hereafter that we ought to be—how frequently, as we pass along, will it be both interesting and profitable to sketch some object, natural or artificial, the description of which is needed for explanation or illustration ?

Are the pupils, however, to be passive in *all this* ? Certainly not. We cannot make

them so, if we would. One will try to draw some place on his slate, which has been drawn on the black board in the progress of the conversation ; another will, perhaps, wish to ask some question about the construction of a gallows, or a fort ; another will write down or revolve, in his mind, more or less concerning the events. We should always let as many of the sketches, maps, &c. which have been drawn at any particular lesson remain for some time upon the black board as we possibly can ; and here is an important reason for having at least one very large board in the school room for general purposes.

But this repeating something which has been drawn, upon the slate, is not all which our pupils may be expected to do. They may be required to write down on their slates, the historical facts which they may have heard repeated ; and this, too, as far as they may be able, in the order, as regards time, in which they took place.

For example, suppose we had told them at one time about La Fayette, and the French army, which he was the means of bringing over to this country, and what battles they were chiefly concerned in ; as well as how it happened that La Fayette and his country were moved to come on and help us. Suppose that at another time we had told them about the battle at Bunker Hill,

who were engaged in it, how it originated, in what it terminated, &c. Suppose, once more, we had told them the story of Major Andre's execution, and General Arnold's treachery. Now would it not be a useful exercise to require them to relate these events, on their slates—briefly of course—in the order in which they occurred?

This exercise would be of service in many more points of view than one. For there might be pupils whose mental organization or whose habits were such as might lead them to much inaccuracy about the order of events, especially when history was taught them in the manner here recommended. In writing down what they had heard of the revolution, it might, by possibility, read thus; precisely in the order in which the lessons had been given out by the teacher.

"The American people grew tired of sustaining the war alone; they wanted men and money. The French government accordingly sent over General La Fayette, with men, and money, and ships to our aid. The money and ships and men were all of great service to us; the men fought for us, on several occasions, and were subjected, on our account, to many trials, hardships and losses.

"At Boston, the British had almost overrun the country, as well as the city; but

the Americans, having determined to take a stand on Bunker Hill, in Charlestown, began to fortify it. The British undertook to drive them away, when a great battle ensued, in which, though the British were defeated, the American general, Dr. Warren was killed. On the spot where he fell, a monument is now being erected, called Bunker Hill monument.

“General Arnold, who commanded the American army at West Point, discouraged perhaps with the war, and dissatisfied with General Washington and the government, undertook, in a wicked manner, to give up the army and West Point to the British troops at New York. To help along the project, Major Andre, a British officer came out from New York into the neighborhood of West Point in disguise, but was taken up and condemned as a spy and executed. He was taken at Tarrytown, on the Eastern side of Hudson’s river and hung at Tappan, on the Western side, about 30 miles above New York City.”

Now such an arrangement of facts, erroneous as it is, would be perfectly natural, at least to the thoughtless and giddy. For we must never forget that the young are never destitute of curiosity, and therefore love to hear stories and grow in knowledge. They are volatile, and sometimes impatient. They are not always willing to take pains

about the order of events, or their remoter effects or causes. A great deal of patience is often needed, to enable us to begin with them, and as circumstances may require it, to set them right.

In the above instance the correction is not difficult. It is easy to show that the war of the revolution began in and about Boston, and that the contest at Bunker Hill, was an event of early date. That Arnold's treachery, was next to this, in the order of time, and the arrival of La Fayette, in this country last of the three. In general, unless a pupil is peculiarly sensitive, these corrections, with the explanations which would naturally accompany them, may be made before the whole school, and will be found as interesting to many others, as to the individual for whose special benefit they were intended.

This branch may be pursued farther or not so far, as may seem to the teacher most expedient, in his particular circumstances. There is, however, one method of pursuing it, upon which I wish to dwell somewhat longer.

To those who have gone a little way in this branch, either on the black board or elsewhere, and who are familiar with Geography, exercises like the following, may be highly useful. True they are most valuable as a review, after we have studied

books—but we have abundant proof that these slate and blackboard exercises do not exclude books, but lead to their profitable study.

The teacher will draw an outline map of France, and after inserting the river Seine, and perhaps a very few other natural features of this great empire, will put down his crayon on Paris, and say ; Do you know what city of France stands here on the river Seine ? If they say, Paris ; he asks ; What does history say of Paris ? What great events have occurred here, and at what periods ? &c. The questions may be written, if the teacher prefers it, on the black board, and be suffered to remain there in full view of the school, who as fast as they are able prepare their replies to the several questions. In other cases, immediate verbal replies only may be required,

CHAPTER XIII.

BIOGRAPHY.

The importance of Biography, as a branch of English education, seems to me undeniable. The only debate or question connected with it, is how amid a multiplicity of other things, confessedly indispensable, we can by possibility find time for it. For if taught at all, it should be taught in the common school.

Biography, however, is a branch which can be pursued, to a greater or less extent, according to circumstances. It is not with it, as with History or Grammar, especially the latter, that unless *studied through*, as a system, we derive from it but little benefit. Its successive portions, are, in a great measure complete, by themselves. Thus, we may study the life of Paul or Howard or Washington, and then stop forever; and yet we do not necessarily lose what we have learned. We are still acquainted, more or less, with the distinguished individual whose life we have studied, and though an acquaintance for example with La Fayette,

Franklin, Lee, Greene, Knox, Adams, Hancock, and many other of his cotemporaries would make us much more intimately acquainted with Washington himself, than we should otherwise be, we still feel, I say again, that we have accomplished something. And we feel right. Hence if we cannot do every thing in common schools in the way of studying biography which we wish, every teacher may make a beginning, as well as not. There are always moments for this purpose, will we but use them. But this I shall show more clearly in the chapter on morality.

In teaching biography, on the black board, I would always begin with valuable characters; such for example as Paul and Howard. I have mentioned the names of warriors in connection with *history*; not because warriors are often good men, but because it is much easier to teach history in connection with their names than with those of any other class of citizens.

Let us take the biography of Howard. The teacher sketches the boundaries of the great empire of European Russia. 'Here,' he says, "in the northern part, is St. Petersburg; quite a large city; here in the southern part is the city of Cherson. Do any of you know what distinguished man died here? It was John Howard. What do you know of John Howard? Was he

an American, a Frenchman, a Russian or Englishman? What was he at Cherson for? Where was he going, when he went from Moscow to Cherson and died there?"

I do not mean to intimate that many pupils in a common school, would be likely to answer such questions as these; for it could not be expected. Some few however who had read the life of Howard, might be able to do so. At any rate I have indicated the course which conversation on the subject might naturally take; and which indeed it ought to take.

It might be too much to go through with his life, at a single lesson, but we may make a beginning. We may speak of some of the places which he visited on errands of mercy, and sketch them in passing, on the black board. At the next lesson, the pupils may be questioned by way of review, on the former lesson, and also made somewhat more familiarly acquainted with his character.

Great care I admit, is indispensable, on the part of teachers who would teach biography history or geography in this way, by topics. For not to put together our topics, afterward, is sometimes to confuse if not confound our pupils. Still, with pains and ingenuity, there is, I think, no insurmountable difficulty.

We may begin at the close of a man's

life, as in this case of Howard, and then go back to his birth, and go through with it regularly ; or we may begin with some interesting fact respecting him, and go backward and forward both. The only real difficulty is in making the pupil understand *where we are* and *what we are about*, at all times. So in teaching history ; we may begin the history of the United States with Washington and the revolution, and run backward and forward, till we have completed it.

One more example of biography ; that of Paul. I have spoken of his shipwreck, under another head, and for another purpose. Nevertheless, taking advantage of that as introduction, or of some other fact with which it is supposed a part of the pupils may be already familiar, I would commence his life at the same place, and go backward and forward, according to convenience till I had completed it.

The teacher might make a hasty map of the Mediterranean sea, and having made it distinctly understood by the class what sea it was, proceed as follows.

“ Here,” putting down his crayon, near the island of Malta, “ about 1800 years ago, a vessel being wrecked on the rocky coast of this island, the crew and passengers consisting in the whole of about 270 persons—one of them an old man of fourscore, and

others of them probably grey headed—all got ashore in safety ; even though the sea run high and the vessel came to pieces suddenly, and they had no boat. Was not such an escape remarkable ?

“ Now among this 270 persons was one man, whom most of you already know something about, and who was one of the most distinguished men, in many respects, that the world ever saw. Do any of you know his name ? And where he was going, in the vessel, when he was shipwrecked ? And on what island he was cast ? Do you know what befel him on the island ? Do you know what become of him afterwards ? ”

These questions show what course the conversation would naturally take. The teacher would speak of Paul's going to Rome—why he went there ; what befel him there, &c. Then he would go back to the cause of his being sent there, which would of course lead to a great many more particulars of his history. Something more might now be said of the voyage, the places they passed, &c. &c. This would lead, very naturally, to a word about Tarsus, the place of Paul's nativity ; and this again to his early life, conversion, first preaching, &c. In this way, by beginning in the middle of his history and going both forward and backward, the course would be made interesting and intelligible, without being

formal ; and in the end, by reviewing, or questioning the pupils, might be made clear, correct, and orderly.

Not unlike this is the Bible method of teaching biography, and I have often thought this might be one reason why the biography of the Bible is so deeply engaging and so permanently interesting. Take the case of this very same Paul. The first we know of him, he is a grown man, and already a fiery persecutor of the young Christian church. After his conversion, his history continues a while, till ere long, we are carried back, incidentally, particularly in his public speeches, to an account of his birth and education.—Again we follow him in his travels both in Europe and Asia, over sea and over land, till we find him sent to Rome, where for aught we know to the contrary, after having long braved the dangers of sea and land, and many thus narrowly escaped death, he became a martyr to the cause he had advocated.

Whatever, therefore, may be the merits or demerits of this method of teaching biography, of one thing we are sure, at any rate ; that it is striking and interesting ; and that by means of slates and black boards, many of the facts are not only made more tangible, as it were, but for this very reason, better and longer removed than in any other way.

CHAPTER XIV.

GRAMMAR.

Admitting English Grammar to be the art of speaking and writing the English language correctly, it might seem at first view, that if a child, by proper attention to spelling, defining, reading, writing and composing, could be brought to speak and write correctly, it would supersede the necessity of studying Grammar as a separate branch, and save many months, if not years of valuable time.

Now I have not the least doubt that a course of instruction, like the foregoing, especially in spelling, defining, reading and composing, followed up by such *book* instruction as the slate can only make preparation for, would render many pupils better grammarians than our youth are usually found to be. And yet I think that the direct study of Grammar *subsequently* to the course of instruction to which I have referred, but not *before* it, may have its uses. I think that if those who attend to it should not read and speak any better on account of it, they would, at least, read and speak

more *intelligibly*, both to themselves and others.

It is on this belief, and not solely with reference to the public prejudice in favor of Grammar, that I am disposed to give special attention to it, as a distinct branch. I know it is generally esteemed by our pupils as an exceedingly *dry* and *irksome* study; but it need not be so. It may be made as interesting to the young of every age, as almost any thing else. The only thing required is to render it as intelligible, and I might say as *tangible* as other studies.

Now I claim that the slate and black boards give to the study of Grammar, as they do to several other common school studies, a good degree of what I have here called tangibility. They certainly have done in my own hands; and I doubt not they may in the hands of others.

What, then, is the course of instruction in English Grammar, which should be pursued in connection with the slate and black board?

We should begin by requiring our pupils to write down on their slates, the names of *substantial things*, or in other words nouns; but without telling them at first, for what purpose. One of the exercises under the head of "Spelling," in which words are arranged in classes or natural families, is a kind of

preparation for this part of Grammar to which we are now directing our attention.

- The pupils should be made to understand, —not merely told it,—that the words which they are writing down must all be such words as will either mean something when standing by themselves, or with *a*, *an* or *the* placed before them. And in order to teach
- them how to act according to this rule, we must frequently bring words to this test on the black board. Thus suppose a pupil writes down the word *sour* under the erroneous belief that it means something. The teacher may then write it on the black board, and then say, “now is there any such thing as a *sour*? We may indeed say a *sour* apple or *sour* vinegar, and *sour* looks, but is there any such thing as a *sour*, without putting some other word with it? Think now, whether it has any sense without something put before or after it.”

In this way, that is in bringing words to the test, on the black board, may a teacher soon show his pupils what he means.—There will be very little difficulty with what are called proper nouns, or with the far greater proportion of all others. Still there is a class which it will be more difficult to get along with; chiefly, however, because their meaning is not understood.

* for to such words as ingeniousness, cor-
lence, susceptibility, &c., expressive

of qualities, and yet retaining the character of substantive words. But it is hardly reasonable to expect the pupil to understand this matter thoroughly at first.

We need not be in haste about telling him that he is now engaged in the study of Etymology, a part of English Grammar. It is in fact, of no consequence whether he knows, for some time to come that he is studying Grammar. Nor need he ever know, till he has been quite familiar with their nature, the names, noun and substantive, as applied to this class of words. The character of the thing should first become familiar to him, and afterwards we may give him its name.

Next to the noun, we should study the adjective; but not under the name of adjective; this for a time should be withheld. We should write some common noun on the black board, very conspicuously, and require our pupils to write, on their slates a list of such words, as when placed before it would make sense with it. For example, the word horse might be placed before them thus;

horse.

“The question now is,” the teacher will say, “what words are acquainted with which, when placed before it, will make sense with it?”

but can we say a *walk horse*? Or you may possibly write down John or Thomas; but can we say a John horse, or a Thomas horse? We may indeed say John's horse, but not John horse. But if you write the words red or white or black, these will make sense with horse; for we can say a white horse, or a black horse, or a red horse. There is a very great number of words of this class, and if no one pupil should be able to think of but a few, yet among them all they would, at least with a very little prompting, be able to make out a much larger number. For the benefit of those teachers who have thought but little on this subject, I will here insert a list of such adjectives as will make sense—and good sense, too,—with the substantive word *horse*.

| | | | |
|---------|----------|--------------|--------------|
| red | kind | homely | slow |
| white | gentle | agreeable | ungovernable |
| grey | ugly | disagreeable | unmanageable |
| black | cross | old | unruly |
| pied | obedient | young | wild |
| good | beakthy | small | gay |
| bad | sickly | large | headstrong |
| vicious | handsome | swift | |

It may not be amiss to remind the teacher of what perhaps may have already forced itself upon his mind, that in almost every one of these exercises in grammar, the pupil improvement in spelling, defining,

main, if not sole, object of this
dy, it would be worth our attent
uld be beyond the possibility of
eedingly valuable.

But to return to the adjective. A
yond the mere definition of the ad
its simplest form, should not, at f
empted, lest we confound and p
ner than enlighten, and improve.
ng in regard to the comparison
t of speech, and all doubtful w
ds I mean which he on the confu
en the adjective and the noun o
hand, and the adjective and the
the other should, as far as possi
iously avoided.

will be time enough, in this case
former, to give out the *name* ADJE
we have taught the *thing*. L

sentences, not unlike the following, may be prepared on the black board.

| | |
|-----|---------|
| A | man. |
| The | house. |
| A | tree. |
| An | book. |
| | horses. |

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Snow is | |
| Grass is | |
| Life is | |
| The sun is | |
| The | line. |

These blanks the pupils should be required to fill out. The exercise, of course, will not be wholly new ; but so much the better. It will impress more deeply on the mind the nature and power of an adjective ; and should the teacher choose to give them the name *adjective*, it will be long remembered.

The next step may be to teach something about the verb ; beginning, of course, with the verb active or transitive. The superiority of the method of teaching by means of the black board, especially when we are aided by sensible objects, is no where more obvious than at this point. Many of our pupils spend weeks and months in committing to memory and reciting " a verb is a word which signifies to be, to do, and to suffer," &c. &c. without knowing any more about the true nature of a verb than they

did before they began ; whereas with the aid of a black board and a little ingenuity on the part of the teacher, a tolerably correct idea of a verb may be obtained in a very short time.

But how are we to proceed in the question. With a bough from some tree or shrub in his hand, the teacher takes his station at the black board, and with a faithful pupil at his side, one whom he has already partially instructed, he commences performing *a series of actions* which the pupil or monitor writes down on the black board ; the rest, in the meantime, looking on and writing the actions on their slates, or copying them from the black board.

The teacher may bend, swing, cut, break, saw, hack, scrape, wring, snap, strike, bite, top, split, peel and throw the stick. The assistant pupil will accordingly write down the words I have mentioned as fast as the teacher performs the actions.

This assistant pupil will hardly be needed any longer than while the school generally is finding out the teacher's meaning. For many will not, at first, understand him, who after a little aid in the way adverted to, will be among his very best students, in this hitherto dry and much dreaded department.

But other actions may be performed well as those above-mentioned. will, perhaps, whisper, halloo

idea of the nature of an adverb. Holding it up in view of the class, the teacher may say ; How many ways are there of throwing this bough ?

For example, it may be thrown

up
down
forward
backward
sideways
swiftly
slowly
high
far
violently
hastily
leisurely, &c.

Not that one pupil in ten, even of the older and more ingenious, could be led to suggest all these modes of *throwing* the stick, or qualities of action ; but among them all, nearly all these, and perhaps some not included in this list, might be thought of. The principal object, at first, would be, to impress deeply on their minds the idea that an adverb is added to verbs in some way to qualify them, and this is done in exercises like the following, which may be the result

There are many ad-
verbs that

write, walk, run, leap, jump, hop, stamp, crouch, sit, rise, recline, frown, smile, &c. Not that all these are transitive verbs; for many of them are not; but they are all verbs which imply action, and will serve to give the idea of what a verb is.

Being told that these words were verbs, after they have found out their nature—pupils are now prepared to go upon the adverb. The teacher after writing down a verb, on the black board, asks the pupils for such adverbs as may be joined to it.

He writes, for example, the word *run*, and asks his pupils to tell how a person may run. Few of them may understand him at first, but with a little familiar explanation they will soon comprehend his meaning, and will begin to hold up their hands, to signify that they wish to mention words.

One will propose the word *slowly*; another, *swiftly*; another, *lazily*; another, *awkwardly*, or *gracefully*; and another, *violently*. There will be a little difficulty here, I know, about the *ly*; some omitting, and others using it. But this can easily be set right; in fact, this exercise is the very best in the world for eradicating this almost universal error of confounding the adverb with the adjective.

But the stick or bough, so useful in teaching the definition of the verb will be of great use in giving the pupil a correct

idea of the nature of an adverb. Holding it up in view of the class, the teacher may say ; How many ways are there of throwing this bough ?

For example, it may be thrown

up
down
forward
backward
sideways
swiftly
slowly
high
far
violently
hastily
leisurely, &c.

Not that one pupil in ten, even of the older and more ingenious, could be led to suggest all these modes of *throwing* the stick, or qualities of action ; but among them all, nearly all these, and perhaps some not included in this list, might be thought of. The principal object, at first, would be, to impress deeply on their minds the idea that an adverb is added to verbs, in some way to qualify them ; and this by a few exercises like the foregoing could not fail to be the result

There are, it is true, some classes of adverbs that can best be learned by commit-

ting them to memory ; but even in this, it would greatly help the pupil to retain them, by copying them from the black board and neatly writing them on his slate. Such, for example, are secondly, thirdly, fourthly, fifthly, and so on.

A correct idea of the nature of a pronoun may be given by writing down, on the black board, some anecdote ; omitting at first the pronouns and requiring the pupils to supply them. Thus if an anecdote of the elephant were to be written down, we might write it as follows.

“A painter, being desirous of drawing an elephant in the uncommon attitude, of having trunk raised high in the air, and mouth open, employed boy to amuse the animal and keep in the desired attitude by throwing fruit into mouth. But as the lad frequently deceived and made an offer only of throwing the fruit grew angry ; and as if had known that the painter’s intention of drawing was the cause of the affront that had been offered instead of revenging himself on the lad, returned resentment on the master, and taking up a quantity of water in trunk, threw on the paper on which the painter was drawing and spoiled .”

This being written out very plainly on the black board and copied by the pupils, could,

by most, be easily corrected. After the repetition of a few lessons of this kind, another step would be necessary. They should not only be required to supply the appropriate words, but also to tell what they stand for. In this view they should be directed to set down, for once, not the pronouns, but the words which they would use if there were none such as *he, his, him, it, &c.* to be had.

Thus, in the foregoing example, the class might be asked, in order to set them going right, "What was it which was to be raised high in the air and kept there?" The elephant's trunk, they would probably reply. "Then write down the word trunk," would be the proper direction. "Keep whose mouth open?" the teacher asks. The elephant's. "Then write the word elephant's."

When the blanks are thus filled out, let the teacher read the anecdote, as thus prepared, it will afford the pupils much amusement, and at the same time give them a better idea of the true nature of a pronoun—which is, indeed, its chief object—than could be obtained by the mere recital of the sentence "A Pronoun is a word used instead of a noun," &c. for a whole year.

As for a description of the Prepositions, Conjunctions and Interjections, I think this is best given when we come to use them in

composition, and especially when we come to analyze our sentences, or, as it is called, parse them. It may be well to write off a list of each on the black board, and let the pupils copy them, and give them their names; not that they will fully understand them, but to prepare them, in part, for further exercises. Or if the teacher chooses entirely to omit them, for the present, there can be no possible objection to it.

It will now be time to go back, and give the pupils a little knowledge of the various forms, declinations, &c. of the various parts of speech. And first of the *number* of nouns.

This is managed, very easily, on the black board. The teacher has only to write down a list of common nouns, both in the singular and plural form, and ask them what makes the differences in the two columns of words. Thus :

| | |
|-------|--------|
| house | houses |
| book | books |
| tree | trees |
| hand | hands |
| sun | suns |
| star | stars |
| lamp | lamps |
| eye | eyes |
| ear | ears |
| head | heads |

“now,” he says, “in what the

word houses, differs from the word house." It will not be at all difficult for them to perceive that the only difference consists in the addition of an *s*. When it is clearly perceived that this is the only difference throughout, it will be proper to tell them that the words without the *s*, meaning but one, they are in the singular number; and the others meaning more things than one, in the plural number.

But it will be well to go a little farther and show them by familiar examples that though this is the general method of forming plural from singular nouns, yet that there are several other methods, some of which apply to a very large number of words.

Examples of what we mean by the gender of nouns, may also be presented on the black board; together with illustrations of *case* and person. Case is the most difficult of all; and yet even this may be made more intelligible by means of the black board than in any other manner.

What we mean by the comparison of adjectives is better shown in this way than in any other. If the eye assists the ear—as I have all along taken for granted—the more largely we address the eye the better.

And when we come to the number gender, case, &c. of pronouns, we again derive much aid from a full exhibition of the differ-

ent forms and terminations of this part of speech, to the whole class. A good deal of explanation is, indeed, still necessary ; but the explanations themselves are vastly more important when the eye is addressed at the same time.

Nothing, perhaps, which belongs to the etymological part of grammar, as grammar is now usually taught in our schools, is more dry and uninteresting than the conjugation of the verb, and the declension of nouns and pronouns ; especially the former. And yet there are few things which can be more readily made intelligible, not to say interesting, by means of slates and black boards than the conjugation of a verb through its various moods and tenses.

Nor is the black board wholly useless when we come to Syntactical grammar, or parsing. For besides the convenience of having the rule or rules, most important to be kept in mind at any given time, constantly before the pupils, in large letters, there are a thousand little devices which may be resorted to, with the chalk and pencil, for making a thing intelligible, which cannot be practiced in other circumstances. Let me present a few specimens of what I am now speaking of.

Suppose it is desired to show how "active verbs govern the objective case." We accordingly write, on the black board,

“Washington defended his country.”—
Here, in order to make a strong impression on the youthful mind, we may draw a curved line from the governing word to the word which is governed ; or at least require a pupil to do it, in view of the rest. Take, for example, the sentence already mentioned.

Washington defended his country.

Or, to make the impression still stronger, we may place the governed word below the line of the rest, implying as it were, a sort of submission. Thus,

Washington defended his
country.

Again, in endeavoring to make plain the rule, “The nominative case governs the verb,” we may resort to the same general plan. I use again the same sentence as before.

Washington
defended his country.

Again, there is a rule in most of our grammars which says, “Conjunctions connect the same moods and tenses of verbs and cases of nouns and pronouns.” Now in order to make this rule intelligible, we may well pursue a course not unlike the former.

In the following sentences the words which the conjunctions control are connected together by a curved line.

“My Father taught my brother and me to read.”

“He and she were school mates.”

“The poor are often despised and oppressed.”

“To be good and to do good, should be our main object in life.”

All this, it may be said, amounts to very little ; and I freely acknowledge it. Or, at least, I am free to acknowledge that there is nothing very wonderful about it. But so much the better. If there is nothing wonderful or wonderfully difficult about it, and yet if it is really calculated, as I maintain it is, to render a subject which is usually regarded dry and unintelligible, at once plain and interesting, then trifling as they may seem in the detail the suggestions which have been made and the plans which have been proposed certainly have their value, and deserve a measure of the attention of every teacher.

CHAPTER XV.

VOCAL MUSIC, OR SINGING.

Concerning music in schools, and especially the most approved methods of teaching it with the aid of the black board, I have very little to say ; chiefly, for the want of experience. I only know that most of our distinguished teachers, who have called in this instrument to their aid, place a high value upon it, and are continually found using it. How can it be otherwise than useful, then, in common schools, in which the public opinion is fast deciding that singing shall be taught ?

There are two considerations which weigh much, with me, in the decision of this question. First ; it seems to me obvious that in order to have the young understand music, thoroughly and practically, they must be able to read it, if not to write it.—Secondly, that a single black board would answer the purposes of both teacher and pupils, nearly as well—especially in conjunction with slates—as books on the subject, with paper, pen and ink ; besides being vastly less expensive.

Much as I value music, in our schools, on

account of its physical, social, and moral tendencies, I do not believe any instrumentalities are necessary but those to which I have alluded. I take for granted, however, that the teacher is duly qualified for his task; for otherwise very little can be done—whether the instrumentalities be of one kind or another. Whether it is, or is not, true that he “who has no music in his soul, is fit for treason,” one thing I am sure of, that he who has no music in his soul is not fit to *teach* music, even in the district school room.

I have spoken as if I was wholly without experience in this matter. But I am not without experience in regard to the moral influence of music, in the common school room. I have witnessed, with emotions of the most exalted pleasure, its happy tendency. More than once have I seen a disorderly or at least noisy school brought to order and quiet, in a few moments, by means of singing. But as I have already said, if singing in our schools is of so much importance, this must certainly enhance the value of slates and the black board, since the voice of public opinion in regard to their use in teaching this art, wherever they have been tried, is without exception, decidedly in their favor.

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CHAPTER XVI.

OF DRAWING.

The formation of geometrical lines of the figures used in writing, and of many of the letters of the alphabet, while it is a part of the instruction which belongs to those branches, respectively, is also an important preparation, as I have already said, for that more particular and extended and thorough cultivation of the art of drawing, which if it cannot be said to be indispensable to all, is at least highly useful.

Were this the place for it, I might go on to show the great importance, to people of all classes, of knowing how to sketch such objects as interest us, whether of nature or art. The task would be as easy as it would be interesting. But I must take for granted that the reader is already convinced of its importance, and of the necessity, even, of making it a part of common school instruction. The question then is, how shall it be taught; or rather what assistance can we derive from slates and black boards.

In the excellent school of Mr. Emerson, late of Wethersfield, in Connecticut, draw-

ing was attended to with no little solicitude; but I am not sure that it was made an object of special attention at a very early period of the course of instruction. On the contrary, judging from Mr. E's. remarks and suggestions concerning it, I suppose that at least he would introduce it gradually, as I have done, among *beginners* in a common school. The following is his language concerning it.

"This is not designed (that is, in his course of teaching,) as an elegant accomplishment, but as a useful art, or rather exercise, for important purposes. But very little time or skill is requisite to delineate a picture, in the manner proposed. By means of oil, common writing paper may be rendered almost transparent. This may be laid upon the picture, which with pen or pencil, may, in a few minutes be very easily traced upon it. The principal object is to take off likenesses of persons who have made the most distinguished figure in history. Drawing these likenesses will tend to produce or increase an interest in attending to their characters. With their looks their names will be associated, which will render it more easy to retain and recal them. With their looks and names, thus associated, the learner associates their actions. This imparts to their whole history, a clearness, distinctness, animation, and familiarity, that other

wise, it can scarcely receive. The likenesses may indeed be imperfect ; but this will not materially alter the happy result. The same method may be adopted in drawing maps and other objects."

Now while Mr. E. justly attaches very great importance to the art of taking off likenesses, he does not seem to me to value, so highly as he ought, the art of delineating other objects ; since he says expressly that with him, in his school, the former is the *principal* object. In our common schools, if not in all other schools, the latter is a much more important object than the former ; since in practical life we have occasion to sketch other objects either of art or nature much oftener than persons, whether distinguished or otherwise.

This is said, however, to increase the sum total, as it were, of the value which we attach to the art, as a whole, and not to lessen it. For if the art of taking off likenesses is only a small part of the science and art of drawing ; and if the whole subject belongs to common schools, where nineteen twentieths of the inhabitants of our country receive all the instruction they ever do receive out of the family and church, how exceedingly important, as an art, must drawing be !

But to the manner, rather than the matter of my subject. Now I have many doubts

in regard to the use of oiled paper, as an instrument of drawing in our common schools, valuable as it may be in select or private schools, and above all in our families. But even if we use it, I would use the slate and the black board at the same time. The latter would be an aid, greatly so, to the former.

In commencing the use of slates and pencils among very young pupils, the practice of representing living objects, as dogs, horses, birds, and men, was alluded to. Now children are very fond of this exercise. In commencing, in good earnest, the subject of drawing, I would therefore, recur to it, somewhat in conformity with the views of Mr. Emerson; never, however, except under the eye or direction of the teacher, without a copy on the black board. But I would not pursue this plan very long. From the representations of men and other animals, I would soon pass to that of things.

No one, so far as I know, has done more to introduce plain, simple, familiar drawing, into our common schools and render it available in the common business and employments of life than Mr. Josiah Holbrook. About three years since he prepared a series of drawing cards, thirty six in number; a set of which, to every teacher who wishes to call in the slate and black board to his aid,

but who feels the want of experience to guide him, in his couse, would be invaluable. It may serve some purpose, if I give, here, a brief account of these cards.*

The first card is a new introduction to the subject, by the author of the series; and contains no lines or figures. The second contains horizontal, vertical or perpendicular, and oblique *lines*. No. 3, contains angles—right, acute, and obtuse angles. No. 4, contains triangles, squares, &c. No. 5, circles, ellipses, curved lines, &c. Thus far he proceeds very much in the order recommended in Chapter II.

But with No. 6, he introduces the figures of a cube, a cylinder, a pyramid, &c.—These, as the reader of course knows, are made up from right lines, and a few curves;—but then they are arranged according to the laws of perspective, in regard to which the pupil will need a little information.

It will be well for the teacher to begin with straight lines, and review, briefly, the whole course, till he comes to the formation of cubes, cylinders and pyramids. Here he will need to dwell, till a little art is acquired, in the formation and combination of these preliminaries. Let him not be in haste.

* These cards are published by Wm. Marshall & Co. of Philadelphia.

The next three numbers of Mr. H. are delineations—that is mere outlines—of a mallet, a cricket or stool, and a funnel, or as it is sometimes vulgarly called a tunnel. They are simply new combinations of the straight and curved lines, already mentioned. The next three are representations of culinary vessels, and are chiefly the result of varied combinations of the curved line; such as the figures of jars and bottles. On these, also, considerable attention should be bestowed, for the sake of the curved lines which they involve.

Several of the next numbers, in order, are of the same general character with those last mentioned. They are either the representations of culinary vessels, or of agricultural or mechanical instruments. Among them are the pail, bucket, lamp, candlestick, watering pot, cork screw, saw, woodhorse, matlock, ax, broad ax, shovel, adze, auger, sickle, shears, curry comb, flail and pitch fork. Let it not be supposed that the drawing of these common instruments and utensils of every day life, especially of agricultural life, is unimportant, or will prove uninteresting to the pupil—for the reverse will be found more true.

While the teacher is setting his copies of these vessels and instruments, he will also do well to describe, more or less fully, their uses, their abuses, their excellencies and

their defects. A vast amount of useful instruction may thus be given, which our pupils at school, very seldom acquire; and without the least hindrance to the main pursuit.

Or what is better still, perhaps, the teacher may introduce the whole subject of drawing, by merely sketching some one or more of these objects on the black board, letting it stand there, and then requiring the pupils to write, on their slates, what they know about the object; its properties, uses, abuses, &c. After a series of lessons of this sort, it may be well to proceed as above. Strange would it be, if some of the pupils have not already tried their skill at drawing the object, before it comes to be required of them. A coarse outline of a dog, for example, will hardly be in full view of pupils with slates in their hands all day, without some of them trying to see what they can do in the way of imitation, &c. They cannot draw, they would perhaps say, and would be loth to try; and yet in these circumstances which I have named, without the interposition of task work—rather as I might perhaps say by stealth—many of them will be surprised at their own success; and not only surprised, but delighted with it.

But the intelligent and ingenious teacher will not confine himself wholly to these par-

ticular objects. He will draw other vessels and instruments, in great numbers—the ink stand and pen, the table, the slate and the black board itself. He will also occasionally recur, for variety's sake, (should the recurrence be necessary in order to keep up the pupils' interest,) to the drawing of persons, houses, animals, &c.

No. 27 and 28, of the series I have mentioned, are an introduction to the drawing of vegetables—an oak leaf, an acorn and a bough. Still, the drawings are mere outlines, and are intended to be so. They should be extended to the trunks as well as limbs of trees ; and into flower, and fruits of various kinds, and various sizes.

To the vegetables, succeed some of the animals—the bird, the snail, (including the shell,) the butterfly, the fish, the snake, the dog, and the horse ; and finally, man. On each of these considerable time should be expended, and many anecdotes or illustrations given.

I have insisted, all along, on the importance of being thorough in every thing ; because the tendency, in common schools, is always the other way—to superficiality. And yet I am aware, that strictly speaking we have no time, in these schools, for perfection in any thing—science or art. All we aim at, is to give our pupils the mere elements, or as it were keys of knowledge.

Nor can in truth the most liberal course of education do more. He who would be a thorough student in any thing must give up to it some of the years of his more mature life.

[The subject of the preceding chapter is now receiving much attention from the friends of public schools. In the Franklin School, Boston, instruction in this branch was given gratuitously during the winter of 1838-9, by a lady, to a class of fifty pupils, with such results, that it has led to its introduction into other schools. The same lady is now (1841-42) giving instruction to a class composed of all the teachers of the Primary Schools, nearly one hundred in all. The details of her mode of teaching is given in "*A Method of Teaching Linear Drawing*," published by E. P. Peabody, Boston.

The "*Primer of Reading and Drawing*" by Mary T. Peabody, contains some excellent exercises in drawing, a few of which are appended to this volume, with the permission of the author. The Primer is an admirable book to assist in teaching children the first steps in reading.]

[The following chapter, on Book Keeping, was prepared by Mr. Harris, the author of an excellent and popular treatise on this subject. Mr. Harris has recently prepared an edition for the use of common schools.]

CHAPTER XVII.

BOOK KEEPING.

An accountant competent to record the business of a large mercantile establishment, should be an elegant and quick penman, expeditious and accurate in computations, familiar with mercantile forms, and having some acquaintance with the business which he is to record. To compass these qualifications, requires much time, and a practice similar to that of the counting room. It is, however, in the power of almost every school boy, with one winter's study, to obtain such a knowledge of simple book-keeping, &c. as may be highly useful to him in the ordinary business of life. Every boy should know how to use practically the *Day Book* and *Ledger*, should be able readily to write an *order*, *due bill*, *receipt*, *promissory note*, &c. Now, nine tenths of the young men who leave school to engage in business, are not only ignorant of any mode of keeping accounts, but of forms of receipts, &c., which necessarily come into the business of the mere day *laborer*. If this evil could not be abated

we would bear it, but it can be, and can be done in our district schools and no where else ; and I shall offer a few suggestions on the best mode of teaching book keeping in these schools. The practice, in some of our schools, of using blank books on which to copy forms, is a good one ; but in most schools it is impracticable, and the slate and black board must be substituted. To make any good degree of progress, classes should be formed, and the members of them be furnished with suitable text books, from which lessons should be given, and recited. At the time of recitation or previously, such forms as are involved in the lesson, should be written on the black board ; which forms should be copied by each member of the class on to his slate.

The first lessons should include the forms of orders, due bills, receipts, invoices, promissory notes, &c., for all who do, and many who do not keep a set of books, have use for these. The peculiarities in these different forms, why one form of a receipt is given sometimes rather than another, the rules and laws which regulate them, &c. should be explained by the teacher at the recitation. These forms, in all their varieties should be copied and studied, till they can be written and repeated readily by the class. After a familiarity is acquired in the *form* of bills of goods or in-

voices, the class should be well drilled in carrying out the prices.

Form third, and similar ones, should be written on the black board, which should be copied on to slates, prices carried out and answers composed. Then should follow examples of Dr. and Cr., with individuals as they ordinarily appear on the Day Book, or Day Book and Ledger. Several examples similar to the account with J. Pratt, may be written on the black board, slates, &c.

For the form of Day Book and Ledger, reference must be had to the text book, which should lead the class along to an important knowledge of the subject. The teacher will find it interesting and profitable to the class, to give them some lessons which involve the principles of *double entry*. Whether it would be advisable to pursue such lessons to any great extent, must be left to the discretion of the teacher, as well as other things of which I cannot here speak. The following forms may be used according to the directions given, or others may be selected from the text book, or made up by the class and teacher.

RECEIPTS.

Received, Hartford, March 4th, 1842, from Daniel Wadsworth, sixty-five dollars, on ~~an~~ account. NICHOLAS HARRIS.

Received, New Haven, June 6th, 1842,
from Joseph Pratt, sixteen bushels of corn,
the amount due me by him.

DANIEL BUCK.

Received, Norwich, August 9th, 1842,
from James A. Ayrault, on account of E.
B. Hall, twenty-five dollars, payment in
full for a horse bought of me by said Hall.

J. M. MORGAN.

ORDERS.

Messrs. Johnson & Co.

Please pay to the bearer, James
Wing, three dollars and twenty cents, and
place the same to my account.

WM. E. IMLAY.

Hartford, Dec. 3d, 1842.

Messrs. Gilbert & Co.

Please deliver to the bearer, thirty
six Shovels, purchased by me this morning.

JOHN OLMS TED.

Hartford, June 19th, 1842.

Mr. James Watson,

Will please pay to the bearer,
Nicholas Harris, twenty three dollars in
goods from your store, and place the same
to my account.

E. W. BULL.

Hartford, March 24th, 1842.

NOTES.

Hartford, June 7th, 1842.

On demand, I promise to pay to the order of Wm. W. Ellsworth, three hundred dollars, value received.

FOX & PEASE.

Hartford, July 18th, 1842.

Six months from date, I promise to pay to the order of John Olmsted & Co., at the Hartford Bank, one hundred dollars and twelve cents, value received.

WM. B. CASE.

DUE BILL.

Due, Hartford, Jan. 4th, 1842, to Henry Barnard, twenty six dollars, (to be paid in corn at market price,) or (to be paid in goods.)

CHARLES DAVIES.

BILLS.

Charles Burt,

To Hayward & Smith, Dr

| | | | | | |
|--------|----|-----|----------------------------|---|----|
| August | 12 | For | 1 days work—man and team, | 3 | 50 |
| " | " | " | 16 bushels potatoes, at 25 | 4 | 00 |
| " | 14 | " | 4 loads manure, " 1,00 | 4 | 00 |

 11 | 50

Hartford, April 9th, 1842.

W. H. Imlay,

To Joel Hills, Dr.

| | | | | | |
|-------|---|---------------------------|---------|----|----|
| March | 3 | For 3 loads Paving Stone. | at 2,00 | 6 | 00 |
| " | 4 | " 3 casks Lime, | " 2,50 | 7 | 50 |
| " | 7 | " 6 days work, | " 1,75 | 10 | 50 |

Received payment, 24 | 00

JOEL HILLS.

Some member of the class may be required to write upon black board, at the time of recitation or before, bills similar to the two preceding, involving different kinds of business. The prices, general arrangement, punctuation, &c. should be subjected to the criticism of the class.

Hartford, June 8th, 1842.

Oliver Ellsworth, Dr.

To Fox & Porter.

| | | | | |
|-------|----|------------------------------|--------|--------|
| April | 6 | For 12 boxes Sugar, 850 lbs. | at ,55 | |
| " | 12 | " 10 bales Cassia, 500 " | " ,40 | |
| June | 1 | " 15 bags Coffee, 648 " | " ,17 | |
| " | 2 | " 20 bls. Flour, | 10,00 | |
| " | 6 | " 10 boxes Raisins, | 1,50 | 992 66 |

Forms of bills like the last may be written on the black board, to be copied on to slates at the time of recitation, when each boy may carry out the prices. This will be found a very useful exercise, and one which can be long practiced with interest to the class.

| JOSEPH PRATT. | | | | Dr. | Cr. |
|---------------|----|------------------------------|-------|-----|--------|
| Aug. | 1 | To 3 bus. Indian Corn, at 75 | 225 | | |
| " | 3 | " 8 cords hard Wood, " 8,00 | 64 00 | | |
| " | 4 | " 6 tons Hay, at 14,00 | 84 00 | | |
| " | 7 | By Cash, | | | 100 00 |
| " | 9 | To 3 barrels Flour, at 5,00 | 15 00 | | |
| " | 10 | By rent of house, | | | 50 00 |
| " | 12 | To 36 Shade Trees, " 20 | 7 20 | | |

The Dr. column shows how much Pratt has purchased, and the Cr. column how much he has paid. In this case the balance owed by Pratt, at date is \$22 45. The class may be required to make out accounts against each other, similar to the above, and show them on their slates when they come together to recite. They should be practiced particularly in locating the figures, *one above the other*, and in adding long columns of figures. Both these exercises are much neglected in our schools.

DAY BOOK.

Mar 1, John Olmsted & Co. Dr.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| To 12 bushels Rye, at 75 | 9 00 | |
| " 16 " Wheat " 1,00 | 16 00 | 25 00 |

Mar 2, Ellery Hills, Dr.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
| To 60 bushels Potatoes, at 20 | 12 00 | |
| " 25 Turkeys 150 lbs. at 8 | 12 00 | 24 00 |

Mar 4, John Olmsted & Co. Cr.

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| By Cash in full, | 25 00 |
|------------------|-------|

At the time of recitation, the members of the class may be required to make such entries upon the black board as would be required in ordinary business transactions, as above, and then post them similar to the following method.

L E D G E R .

| | | |
|-------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Dr. | John Olmsted & Co. | Cr |
| <hr/> | | |
| Mar 1 | To Merchandise, 25 00 | Mar 4 By Cash, 25 00 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Dr. | Ellery Hills, | Cr. |
| <hr/> | | |
| Mar 2 | To Merchandise, 24 00 | |

On the Dr. side of any person's account are posted all sums which he owes you, and on the Cr. side all sums which he pays you. In this case, Olmsted is supposed to have paid all that he owed, and Hills to have paid nothing, consequently owing \$24,00.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUCTIONS.

There are many things which teachers think it important to inculcate in school which can hardly be classed under either of the foregoing heads, although they have an important relation to the subjects of several of them. Such are *the sounds of the letters*, or the *elements of English utterance*; a knowledge of *the powers used in composition*; the use of some of the *abbreviations*; the use of *numeral letters*, &c.

There are several ways of teaching English utterance. One way—perhaps among the best—is that which I am about to mention, involving the free use of the black-board.

Suppose the teacher wishes to present to his pupils the various sounds of the letter c. After assuring them that it has two sounds, its natural soft sound on that of s, and its unnatural or bad sound, on that of k, he thus illustrates the differ-

ence on the blackboard ; requiring them to copy the whole directly upon their slates.

| k. | s. | | k. | s. |
|------|----------|--|-----------|---------------|
| cake | cent | | (ca) cake | (ce) cent |
| coal | city | | (co) coal | (ci) city |
| cup | cylinder | | (cu) cup | (cy) cylinder |

The teacher need not prefix the *ca ce* &c. to the words, till he has shown his pupils by repeated and numerous examples that this is the universal rule ; after which it is useful to prefix them and require the pupils to do the same. Subsequently to this it may be well to write down the rule. “C is hard before a, o and a ; soft before e, i and y ;” and leave it standing on the slate.

The difference between this and the old method of teaching the same thing, is that it was formerly customary to commit the rule to memory, in the first place whether *the thing itself* was understood or not ; whereas, with the aid of the blackboard, &c. teach the *thing itself* first, and the *rule* afterward.

This single example may suffice, as an illustration of the method proposed of teaching the sounds of the letters by the aid of slates and blackboards. A thousand other illustrations might be added, but they would be mere repetitions of this.

To teach the pauses in composition, we have simply to write them and apply th

on the blackboard, according to their respective uses. For my own part, I never care to teach children the use of them at all except in connection with composition, as I have already stated at the close of the chapter on that subject. Still as many teachers prefer to have their pupils commit them to memory, or at least understand that they require a suspension of utterance for a longer or shorter period, it may be well to devote a few moments to that subject.

Let a plain English sentence, then, not unlike the following, be written down, in large, staring letters on the black board.

Samuel, bring your book to me ; I wish to hear you read.

Here I would say, are three of the most important pauses ; the comma, the semicolon and the period. The first is the *comma*, you may imitate it, on your slates. The next is the *semicolon*. The third, and last, is the *period*. They should write them all.

Next they should understand, by my own example, that at the comma, whenever we come to it, in reading, we should pause long enough to say distinctly *one* ; at the semicolon, long enough to say *one, two* ; and at the period, long enough to say *one, two, three, four, five, six*.

In a similar way, should we proceed to teach the use of the colon, the exclamation point, the interrogation point, the caret, the

parenthesis, &c. This is merely teaching them practically, rather than theoretically; I claim for it no merit, on account of novelty. The only caution, I need add, is that which is always very much in point, "Make haste; but *make haste slowly*."

The abbreviations used in *composition* are best taught, in a similar manner, on the blackboard. For this purpose, as it is in the case preceding, the blackboard and slates have better advantage over books, except that they *save the expense* of the latter, and render the subject of study a little more tangible, as it were, and therefore a little more practical. Merely committing such things to memory, does not answer, well, the purposes for which it is intended. I never knew a pupil who fully understood them, in that way. Some of the best readers, and the most liberally educated people whom I know, say, for the following, *Messrs. James Myrick & Co.*; Gentlemen Sirs James Myrick & Co. And why this? Because, in the table where they committed it to their memories, the words Gentlemen, and Sirs both stand opposite the abbreviation that the pupil may have his choice; and as there was no direction about it, *they took both*. The blackboard may prevent such errors.

The numeral letters, like the pauses and sounds of the latter—and for the very same reasons—are best learned from the black-

board. The process need not be long. With very little pains they are both easily understood and readily retained in the memory.

One valuable method is to make, for example, a V in the middle of the blackboard, and after asking what it stands for, then ask the pupils to tell what shall be added to it to make it represent six ; what to make it stand for eight, &c. So of X, XX, C. D, M, &c. Another good exercise is for the teacher to write a certain number on the blackboard or the ordinary characters used in arithmetic ; say 24 ; and then require his pupils to write on their slates, the numeral letters which represent it.

Another exercise on the blackboard consists in making corrections of misrepresentations. Nothing is more common among us than to mispronounce words. Hundreds—perhaps I might say thousands—* of words we almost daily use among us are pronounced awkwardly by many well bred people ; and, by others, entirely wrong. A small number of these words should be placed on the blackboard daily, when it can possibly be spared, and kept on it ; and the pupils occasionally required to pronounce them till the error is effectually eradicated.

* Mr. Burnstead in his " Spelling and Thinking," has about 1000 such words at the bottom of his pages ; and we may be assured that his list includes but a part of those which are current among us.

A similar course may be pursued with errors of expression, such as the use of double negatives, the disagreement of the verb with its nominative case; the common and frequent violation of the rule "the verb *to be* has the same case after it as before it," &c. Also the usual contractions of "have not," "are not," &c. into *haint* and *aint*. Let the teacher write, on the black board,

| | | |
|-------|-----|-------|
| have | not | haint |
| am | not | aint |
| shall | not | shant |

And let them stand there a few days, and let him occasionally drill the pupils on them, and an impression will be made which will never be forgotten. So of "I hain't got no book," and "how sweetly the birds sings!" "It was me that did it," &c. only place them on the blackboard, and place the true English expressions opposite to them, and proceed as before; and your success, though slow, will be sure and certain.

Let me mention one thing more. I alluded to the art of subscribing a letter, directing one to a friend, writing a note, &c. How much of awkwardness there often is in people who ought to know better, in managing these little things. Yet the blackboard and a little ingenuity and patience, might prevent it. How easy it is to make a long square, in the form of a letter, on

the blackboard, and then write within it just as we ought on the back of a letter !—Suitable remarks might be made on the proper way of writing one's name in a book, &c. &c.

In short, there is hardly any thing, which it is necessary for us to know, which, in its rudiments at least, may not in this way be inculcated ; and, on the principle that what is addressed to two senses, the eye and the ear is longer retained than what is addressed to but one, be made eminently practical.

CHAPTER XIX.

MORALITY.

There are several ways of teaching morals and religion with the aid of the blackboard. Some of them are direct; others are indirect. Let me begin with what I call *indirect* teaching.

1. Furnishing employment to the pupils of our common schools, has of itself a moral tendency. To keep children as well as grown people occupied with that which is useful, or even with that which is not hurtful, is one means, among many, of keeping them out of mischief. Hence slate and blackboard instruction, by furnishing much innocent not to say positively valuable instruction and prevents evil, has a moral tendency.

But these employments, throughout, may be positively useful, as well as negatively so. The wise and benevolent teacher—he who not only seeks to make his pupils wiser but also better, will often be able to give a moral turn to his lessons in mere science. The words and sentences selected for various purposes—spelling, defining, reading, &c.—may be such as will slowly but surely effect the heart. Such a tendency, more

especially, may be given to all anecdotes, lessons on biography and history.

3. Morality is also indirectly taught by the habits of industry which are acquired. For it cannot be otherwise than that the lazy custom to which our pupils are subjected, in being confined from hour to hour on the school bench, literally doing nothing—if indeed the teacher can succeed in making them do nothing—has a tendency, so far as it goes, to make them indolent through life. On the other hand, I cannot doubt that by imparting the busy hum of industry, slate and blackboard instruction have a good tendency. I do not of course, forget that bad men are often highly industrious; nevertheless this does not militate at all against what I have said.

4. Once more. How many a time have I seen a school become noisy, unaccountably so, especially towards its close, in spite of all which could be done by the best teacher. Now a part of this evil is justly chargeable on a want of employment. But let a teacher, in these trying circumstances, call the attention of the whole school to the blackboard. Is there no experience, either in all the wide range which has been gone over in this book or that wider range which will be afforded by the efforts of an ingenious teacher, which is adapted to arrest their attention and thus restore quiet and order?

If there is not, then I have not studied correctly the human heart, and, above all the character and habits of infancy and childhood. How long would it take a teacher to sketch, for example, most of the Mediterranean sea and say ; Here is the rock of Gibraltar ; and so relate some anecdote about it. How long to make a picture, of a whale or a seal, or a ship, and say something respecting it, &c. &c.

But morality may be taught *directly* by the aid of the blackboard. How may teachers procure printed cards, containing valuable moral rules and precepts, and hang them up in their school rooms. How many, too, think they have a good moral tendency! Perhaps it is so. But admitting all that is claimed for them, the effect cannot last long ; it must soon wear out. How much more valuable are precepts written on the blackboard, to remain for a time and then erased, and their place supplied by others.

Whether or not these precepts when strictly moral and religious, make much permanent impression, there is a class of precepts which, by helping to establish order in school have a good and I may say, moral tendency. Children are, too often, forgetful of what is told them in school, even when their general purpose is to be obedient. Tell them to do but *one thing at a time*, and they will endeavor perhaps to conform

to your wishes, as long as they remember it, but if they forget it, in five or ten minutes, what then will you do? Tell them over again, do you reply? The reply is a just one; but can you not enlist the blackboard as an aid in this business of telling things over and over again? Can you not write down your precept, or rule, rather, in large letters, and let it stand there in full view of the school, till it becomes needful to substitute something else in its place? It could do harm to no pupil; while it might save much trouble with a large class of those whose worse fault is that of forgetfulness.

How many valuable rules, in manners, morals, &c. might thus be presented to the minds of the pupils of a school, in the course of a single quarter! One advantage which they have over those which are printed and hung up in the room, is, that they do not remain long enough to become stale, before they are removed to make room for something else.

But again; set lessons or lectures on behavior or morals, may be far better inculcated—if teachers choose to lecture their children at all in this way—by aid of the blackboard, than without it. Let a person for instance, be endeavoring to show the influence of evil example. He wrote, perhaps, on the blackboard; the words of Solomon, “one sinner destroyeth much good.”

Now though he may not now forget his own text or motto, while speaking, yet not a few of the pupils may forget the text ; and is it not well to have something to recall it to their minds ?

How many an adult who suffers his mind to wander in church, during the sermon, forgets the text, and unable to get hold of the subject of the discourse, as to aid in recalling his attention, remains for some time, in a state of listlessness ; and loses much of the discourse ? Would not such people be greatly aided if the text were written in large letters on a blackboard behind the minister ? But do children need wander less, while the teacher is lecturing them, than the minds of adults while the minister is preaching ? And would the text in large letters on the blackboard be less useful to them than to adults ? Should we not, act wisely in endeavoring to render that which is, at best, rather dry to children, as interesting as possible ?

